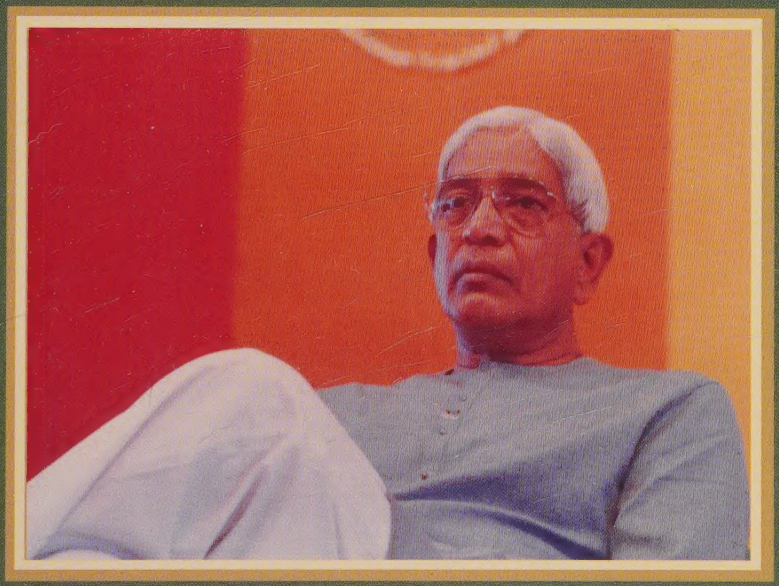
The Principles of Sahaj Marg

Volume XIV



Shri P. Rajagopalachari

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Shri P. Rajagopalachari

SHRI RAM CHANDRA MISSION
World Headquarters
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Publisher's Note

Dear Readers,

We are very happy and proud to present this fourteenth volume in the series *The Principles of Sahaj Marg*. It contains a compilation of Revered Master's talks given at various places in India during his extensive travels all over the country from January to May, 1991.

The talks during this period encompass a wide variety of topics germane to the method of Sahaj Marg and to the daily life of abhyasis. In one of the chapters, the Master highlights how much sincere, dedicated and, most of all, continuous effort is necessary for reaching the goal. Every sitting takes an abhyasi one step closer to the goal, provided the effort *is* sincere and dedicated. He gives a simple analogy of walking: one has to keep on walking until the destination is reached.

We pray that this volume illuminates the hearts of abhyasis, and urge all to walk with perseverance on the path of Sahaj Marg.

The Publishers

1

Growth Through Emulation

Yesterday Br. Harikrishnan spoke excellently. I thought it is his best speech so far. He focused on certain aspects of surrender, without perhaps knowing what he was saying, which is very good. Because when we speak and know what we are speaking, I don't think it is so good. I remember the old Chinese saying,

> "He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is a fool.
>
> Shun him.
>
> He who knows not, but knows that he knows not, can be taught.
>
> Teach him.
>
> He who knows, but knows not that he knows, is asleep.
>
> Awaken him.
>
> He who knows, and knows that he knows, is a wise man.
>
> Follow him."

They stopped there. I think the Chinese were very wise, but not wise enough. The next level is, "He who knows all, but does not know anything," like my Master, you see. That is the highest and that can be achieved only by a state of surrender.

Now Krishna was talking about role models. That is, of course, good. We need role models and, as he correctly said, children do emulate their parents, their peers, their teachers. Unfortunately, the other side of the coin is there: that we also hate people, refuse to follow them. What I am trying to say is, conscious emulation can

14 January 1991, Chennai

take us so far and no further. Beyond that comes the emulation from inside: that we don't really know what we are emulating, why we are emulating, whom we are emulating. I think this happens in the very formative years of the child's life, before it becomes really conscious, and then we lose it. Because then we become selective, we become choosy, we use our intelligence. "Aha! This is a nice model to follow," you know, things like that.

So what we lose, which we had as children before say the age of five or six, when the child became its parents — it did not consciously emulate, but it became, it lived like its parents, it walked like its father or mother, spoke like them, picked up their mannerisms. It is an unfortunate fact of the development of consciousness that we lose these things later, when we become choosy, when we become intelligent. We evaluate ourselves, become, you know, conscious of goals.

I think the true thing about Sahaj Marg is, when Babuji Maharaj told me in private, because he did not like to say it in public, that the Master is the goal, there is no other goal. He was always a little shy of putting himself as the goal. "How can I be the goal?" he used to say, "And how will they follow me?" It was his absolute humility. But it is the truth, that as for him, Lalaji was the goal. It is always, because, as I was trying to tell you in the last two talks, the idea of God is only the idea of God. There is no reality behind God. Babuji Maharaj put this explicitly without any doubt in, I think, *Voice Real*, where he says, "If I ever saw God or experienced God, it was due to the grace of my beloved Master, Lalaji Maharaj. To whom therefore should I be grateful? To God or to my Master?" I mean the answer he doesn't give, but it is very clear. There is no God without the guru. This you have known in Sanskrit, *Gurur Brahma gurur Vishnu gurur devo Maheshwara. Guruh saakshaat Parabrahma tasmai shri gurave namah.* [Guru is Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva (creator, preserver and destroyer) and he is the perceptible God. Salutations to that Guru.]

There is no God other than the guru in Hinduism. Therefore, when we choose between religion and spirituality, we are choosing

between myth and reality. Religion is myth; it is mythological. Stories of Rama and Krishna are all mythological. Forget the question of whether they were historical personalities. Even if they were historical, to us it is a mythology because we never knew them. So was Genghis Khan. He was alive. We know it. But for us it's a mythology you see. What he really did, what he really looked like, what were his real motives, nobody knows. Today Saddam Hussein is a myth. We don't know what he is really doing, because Americans are projecting him as a traitor, as one who is raping Kuwait; and one journalist asked very pertinently: when Israel has attacked Palestine and overran it, where were the Americans and their so outright righteousness in protecting a raped country, or an overrun country? There was no America then prepared to oust the Israelites.

So, you will find, these are all biased situations. We don't know the truth. When we cannot know the truth about the Kuwait of today, the Saddam Hussein of today, the Bush of today, what are we to know about the Rama of the *Treta Yuga* and Krishna of the *Kali Yuga*, just when the *yuga* [aeon] was changing? We cannot. Therefore reality says, follow him who is present before you. It also says if you cannot get the best, follow the second best. Babuji Maharaj was quality conscious. Otherwise, given today's degradation, he should have said, "If there is no second best, follow the third best; if there is no third best, follow the fourth best," which means, follow the best available; we cannot have it otherwise. Because from society evolves its leader, whether in politics or in economics, or in business, or even in spirituality. It cannot be otherwise.

This idea that a god descends to help us — okay, as far as avatar hood is concerned religion says so, we will not controvert it. At least I will not choose to say, "No, it is not possible." Perhaps it is possible. Why not? But that happens once in one yuga, let us say — a million years, one hundred million years — not for us. But for us, each generation has to have its own leader in each sphere. Whether it is in school, or college, or spirituality, or business, or the market place; we have to find the best available to us, and model

ourselves on the way it works — not on the person, please remember this. It's very necessary to remember. Because otherwise, we will end up like some abhyasis of Babuji Maharaj who grew beards and started smoking the hookah, and there their spiritual career ended. One of them even looked to me very much like Babuji Maharaj. I won't mention names. But to me it appeared that he would be the possible successor of Babuji, because he looked very much like Babuji Maharaj. And today he is saying he should be the successor perhaps because he resembles him superficially. Every short man with a long nose, a bald head, and the beard, and not much education, thought if he grew the beard and smoked the hookah, he was the next successor.

Now, successors, if they are so easily made, all of us would have had beards. Instinctively, we know that true emulation is of the soul, of the spirit, not of the body, not of behaviour. It's not enough to walk like Babuji Maharaj, or to talk like Babuji Maharaj, or to smile like him. True emulation means working for the ideals that he upheld. Killing himself for the ideal that he upheld, prepared to accept for himself — what Babuji Maharaj has written so beautifully, "Let the beginning be like mine and the ending like His." You see, it is like a train, which goes from Madras to Delhi. Whoever gets into that train will go to Delhi. They may ... some get in at Nellore, some get in at Kavali, some get in at Vijayawada, the beginnings are all different. But the ending must be the same.

The important thing about spirituality is: is my aim, the goal of my existence, the same as His? In the process, am I prepared to suffer what he suffered to get that goal? Because, you know, it is like climbing a mountain. The Swiss are famous for climbing the Matterhorn and I don't know what else; but they know that if they are going to climb there, they have to face the snow, they have to face the bitter cold, the mountains, the possibility of death itself. And they do it. Some fall, some die, some break their heads, some break their necks, some go to the top. Remember this, that if you want to do it, if it is car racing, you have to be prepared to die in a crash on the track, round and round — 100 kilometres per hour, 120, 160, 180, 320. You cannot be sure that you are going to win

the race. You cannot even be sure that you are going to come out of it alive; but hundreds of people do it. Climbing the mountain, same; crossing the oceans, the same.

If, for mere physical pleasures, physical pursuits, physical goals, to get gold medals and silver medals, we are prepared to lose our lives because the champion did it; go up the Himalayas to climb Everest, because some fool of a fellow did it, why not in spirituality we should be able to suffer? Or be willing to suffer? Because the first quality that we need to be able to do anything, is the willingness to do it. One who is not willing can never be able. It is no secret. I mean, it's perhaps not understood by everybody, that when Babuji Maharaj said, "No qualifications for Sahaj Marg, only your willingness," he was playing his trump card, you see. If he said 'capacity,' none of us would be here. I wouldn't be here in any case, because I never thought of myself as a spiritual person. I was a very worldly person, enjoying life to the fullest, happy in it.

Sometimes I still think I made a mistake coming to spirituality, you see [laughter]; but that is by the side. When he told me, "I only want willingness," I said, "Yes, I am willing." I didn't know then that I was like the rat going into the trap, with no gate letting you outside. This is a one-way entrance in Sahaj Marg, you see. I mean this. Even people who have left us don't understand this, that there is no leaving Sahaj Marg once you are in it. Babuji Maharaj told me long ago. I said, "So many people are leaving." He said, "Where can they go? If not in this life, in the next life they have to come to me again. Or after four lives they have to come. They cannot escape me once they are here." But this is not a trap. It is like the trap of love, of marriage. Sometimes we feel we would have been better off without it, you see. But those are the rare occasions; and if it does not happen, it would not heighten the good and the joy of the other occasions.

So, please remember that when you choose to emulate, we may begin with the physical emulation, we may begin with praise, we may begin with adoration, we may begin even with

worship of the person whom we are following, but all that becomes empty nonsense if you are not prepared to emulate him in his work, in his sacrifices, in this spiritual approach that he had down to the last atom of his existence. This is the truth, you see, of spirituality. It is the thing which makes religion useless, because you cannot follow an idol in a temple. You cannot grow four arms and become a *chatur bhuja* [four-armed]. You cannot have *gada* [mace] and *shankh* [conch] today. People will laugh at you. It's all right for the dramatic stages. So, what is there to follow in a temple? It has become a rubbish heap, a dustbin. You try to go there, throw your sins there, pray for repentance, pray for forgiveness; in token of which you break a coconut and bring back half home, and you are satisfied God is there. But when you come home, even before you reach home you are doubting, "What is this? Will it benefit me?" So you go to another temple and perhaps a third temple, and on Saturday to Tirupati. If you had faith, why should you go to more than one temple ever? And why should you go more than once? The fact that we have to go to temples again and again is an absolute foolproof testimony to our lack of faith in what we are we doing. We are liars, we are cheats, we are hypocrites. Who are we cheating? Not God, because He cannot be cheated. You are cheating yourself.

So you see, we stand self-convicted. You don't need another authority to convict you and say, "You are liars, you are cheats, you are hypocrites; you are blasphemous individuals making stone of a god who should be real to you," because you have made it a stone. God is real; you have made it a stone, because you say, "This is only a stone. This is Vinayaka. Let me go to Lakshmi for wealth. Let me go to Saraswati for knowledge. Let me go to Shiva for *shakti* [power]. Let me go to another person, Kubera, for some money lending quickly." "No, no, but how can he give?" "No, but did he not give Venkataachalapati when he fell in love with that woman downstairs," as Dr. Varadachari used to say. Even gods have illicit relationships. Nachiar (for instance) [*Nachiar Tirumozhi,* a tamil poetry, describes various ways of attaining union with Lord Krishna]. And whenever Kubera's interest is not paid, Venkataachalapathi's hand is handcuffed;

and the devotees pour money to pay off the interest. Look at this. The god has fun and the devotees are paying for it. Invertendo. Instead of he paying for our sins, we are paying for his sins. So what is this *tamasha* [irony] of religion, you see. Where is the role model? Where is the goal? Where is the person whom we worship? Can you see him? Can you know the reality of his being? Have you seen the Mahishaasura that Durga killed? Have you seen the Ravana that Rama destroyed? Or is it only in stories, which we disbelieve.

So you see, spirituality is a very serious pursuit, whole-hearted pursuit, totally committed pursuit, of the truth. The truth being that there is an existence beyond this existence. And that existence cannot be known from this existence. It has to be achieved. It has to be grown into. We have to evolve into that existence; and when we are there it will appear as natural and as normal as this existence. When I asked Babuji Maharaj, "What is wonderful about your life?" He said, "Nothing." I said, "What do you mean, nothing? Surely, after becoming the master of the universe, you must have felt some elation, some happiness." He said, "Only suffering." Only suffering, you see. And he was happy about it. He smiled and said, "I am telling you, only suffering. Hmhmhmhmhmh." And I said, this man must be crazy, you see, to sit in his easy chair, smoking a hookah and smiling and saying, "I am suffering for the universe." But that is what is expected, you see. If you are to weep, you are unfit for suffering. If you don't weep and don't smile, you are becoming fitter. If you can laugh, wonderful; if you can be silent, that's the best.

Therefore, you see, we want people who can silently suffer. No brandishing, no proud display of my suffering, "Look at the wounds, look at my heart, how much there is blood in it." Not all this nonsense. There is no dramatics in Sahaj Marg. Are you willing to silently follow the Master, in his silent evolution, silently, without talking about it, boasting about it, bewailing its suffering and sorrow? Then you are a fit *paatra* [recipient] for Sahaj Marg. Outwardly, he was always wearing silk kurtas and beautiful new dhotis — manicured impeccably; I have done it myself. I used to

like him to be beautiful. Why not? I like a beautiful master. He was beautiful. He didn't need any *aavaranams* [coverings] and jewellery. Unlike the temple gods on whose necks you have to put diamond and gold, and whom you have to dress in silks, he was beautiful in himself. Anyone who needs anything to show that he is beautiful, or she is beautiful, is ipso facto not beautiful. The total beauty is of the naked condition, not the body. But the unadorned spirit, where you cannot say, "It is this, it is this, it is this."

What I really try to tell you is, he cannot be described. What can you describe my Master as? Kind? Sometimes. Happy? Rarely. Sorrowful? Sometimes. Always, you know, 'sometimes', 'rarely', 'occasionally', this that and the other. There was no permanent description available of him. Healthy? Sometimes. Sick? Often. But he was always oscillating between health and sickness, hour-to hour, sometimes minute-to-minute. One minute he is dying on the bed, you know, groaning away, and next minute, he is saying, "Who is there? I am supposed to go today. Where is my stick? Where is my cap?" And you know, he is putting on his coat and walking before you are ready. Because you thought he is sick, you are not prepared. You think you are going tomorrow; but he has made up his mind to go today and has converted his state of sickness into a state of health within fractions of a second.

When we were going to Copenhagen in 1980, and his birthday was celebrated in Delhi, everybody knows he arrived absolutely sick. Because, stupidly, in that summer they brought him by car all the way from Shahjahanpur — temperature one hundred and twenty, one hundred and twenty-two. Twenty-four hours or thirty-six hours before we were to go, three doctors certified his blood pressure to be something like thirty-two by eighteen — a blood pressure which cannot exist in a human system. That man should have died. More so, that same afternoon, it was even less — twenty-eight by eleven, or fourteen, or something like that. Ridiculous. You cannot even believe it. So I met him, I saw him, I said "Babuji, tomorrow night we have to go. What are we going to do?" He said, "We shall go; because my Master says we shall go." I said, "Your blood pressure." He said, "Don't worry." Evening,

it was sixty by thirty-two. Next morning, to the chagrin and the surprise of the doctors, it was eighty by sixty-two. Two hours before we were to leave, it was perfect one hundred and twenty by eighty; and the doctor said, "How is this possible?" He said, "You ask my Master. You see. He does everything."

So, faith in the Master, absolute trust in the Master, surrender to the Master, does not guarantee your well-being. Please let me repeat this again. It does not guarantee anything for you at any time, anywhere, now, in the future, ever. What does it guarantee? That you will be fit if you are going to do His work. You will be as fit as is necessary, to the extent that the Master determines your fitness to be necessary. You will have as much money as he thinks you should have. You will go where he thinks you should go. You will see what he thinks you should see. You will even be able to liberate only those persons whom he wishes you to liberate. There is no freedom at all in spirituality.

I had a taste of this once. When I had polyps in my nose and I could hardly breathe, I was suffering for months. But strangely I found every time I sat down to give a sitting, my nose cleared and I was freely breathing. So I went and told Babuji, "What is this? It happens every time I sit in meditation and the doctors don't know why." So he looked at Kasturi and said, "*Dekho bititya, humne kya bataaya tum se* — Look Kasturi, what did I tell you? That when He wants his work done, He creates the perfect condition for it." I said, "Babuji, this is very unfair that when He wants me to be fit for His work, I am fit; and for the rest of the twenty-four hours I have to suffer." He said, "There is a solution." I said, "What?" He said, "Work all twenty-four hours — all twenty-four hours you will be fit." [laughter]

So there is a solution, you see. If you want to be always happy, always fit, always with something to do — work for him all the time. This is not a part-time job. Here you cannot say, "I have time for myself." Some Europeans came and complained to Babuji, "I have no time for myself." He said, "You know, I have also no time for myself." And these people did not know whether to

laugh or to weep. They did not understand what Babuji was trying to say. They said, "Fool, what are you talking about?" "I have no time for myself. Even to drink a glass of water, I have to pray to Him first. 'Shall I have this glass?' If He permits, somebody brings it for me." You see, this is a very total path. It is a frighteningly total thing, if you cannot accept it. It is a delightfully total thing, if you can accept it. The delight, or the fright, rests in your degree of acceptance of Him and His work.

See, now there are problems, your family will say, you are neglecting them. My family does. But I want to tell you one thing here, which Harikrishnan said yesterday about *guru rina*, *pitru rina* and *rishi rina* — the debts that we owe to our forefathers, to our parents, and to the guru, and to God Himself. It is no secret. All of you have read I hope in In His Footsteps, where I have written about how Babuji Maharaj very graciously liberated my mother. At that time, I asked him, "Why? Why did you do this?" He said, "Because she is your mother." I said, "But there are so many mothers of so many children. Don't they deserve your kindness, your sympathy, your mercy?" He said, "You know, you are a special case." I said, "In what way?" He said, "You have to work for me. And when you are working for me, I don't want you to be bothered about your own family, ever, for anything at all." He said, "I have liberated your mother. Your father is in the central region. Liberation is automatically guaranteed for him. Your wife also is in the position of liberation. You don't have to worry about her." And then he did something even for my son, and said, "For him too, you need not worry. Now you see, by Lalaji's grace, you are free from the problems of your family. You have not to think even of their spiritual future. You go ahead and do the Master's work."

So you see, this is not neglect. It is only that I have been able to find a master who has taken upon himself the responsibility for my family's welfare, not only here, but in the hereafter, totally. Therefore, I am free. I wander the world, knowing that he is looking after them better than I could ever look after them. But

sometimes, you know, not only your family will complain, but neighbours will complain, friends will complain. "You bloody fool, your wife had a stroke, and you are in Europe." We can only laugh and say, "But what can I do, you know? My program was fixed six months back. I cannot change it." I mean, these truths, we cannot go around telling everybody. Some things can be told to some people. Certain other things to certain other people. Nothing to some people. Everything to some people. The people to whom we can tell everything are few in this world. I only found my Master, nobody else.

So you see, we have to be able to accept that this is a total shave, not like the Tirupati shave, which you get free. Here, you are stripped of everything. You are stripped of your ego, you are stripped of your personality, you are stripped of your family, you are stripped of your life itself, until what remains is the pure inner Self, which is His. It was always His. He is only, you know, like you buy a coconut, remove the fibre, break it into half, throw away the shell; take the coconut, scoop it out, cut it into pieces, put it in ghee, fry the damn thing and eat it. The coconut must be undergoing the torture that we are undergoing, "What is this fellow doing to me? First my fibre, okay. Then my shell, okay. He drinks the water. He pulverizes the meat." We, every one of us, is doing the same thing, with the things that we like; but we are not able to liberate anything. When you eat a fish, you are not liberating the fish. Thank heavens most of you now are vegetarians. When you eat something else, a *bhindi* [lady's finger] for instance, you are not able to liberate it. But when He eats us up — I can only find this expression, which is more apt than anything else — when He eats us up, He liberates us.

I remember Dr.Varadachari once telling me that all these avatars, when they destroyed their enemies — Ravana, Kamsa — they liberated them. The destruction was apparent; the liberation was the reality. And this is the myth behind, you know, for instance Lord Narasimha, eating up Hiranya completely, as they say in the *Shastras*, not a hair of his body was left. Because at that

level of liberation, nothing can be left behind. If there is anything left behind, we have to come back to pick up the pieces. This is what the samskara theory says.

So, emulation here really means emulating for one's own purpose first, emulating him next, emulating him for his purpose later, and then getting lost in the process without knowing whether I am emulating him, or his purpose, or following him, or lagging behind. Nothing should be in the consciousness. I think it is at that stage, perhaps, that intercommunication begins if the master has already left this world. Because he sees this man lying here, he doesn't know what he is doing, why he is doing it, where he is, what he is. Then his grace has to come anew. That though now a disembodied master, he has to come and say, "Get up." He gets up. "Go there and put on your coat." "Yes." "Go to Mathura." "Yes." "Follow this fellow." "Yes. What shall I do now?" "Wait." So that is the most difficult part, this waiting, you see. It's easy to do things. Wait? How long can you wait? It's only a dog, I know, which can wait. "Stay." And the dog will stay for hours. A cat will not sit. A cow will not sit. A bull will not sit. A crow will not sit. A human being will never sit. The ability to wait is a reflection of your attitude of patience, which can come only from faith. He who has faith, can wait. He whose faith is total, can wait infinitely.

So, you see, these are the demands of the spiritual path; these are the promises that are realizable; these are the ultimate aims and objectives of our Mission. And what is it that an abhyasi can get? Everything. But please remember, this 'everything' is not composed like one of these jigsaw puzzles of different pieces of happiness: marital happiness, familial happiness, social happiness, job satisfaction, holiday happiness — nothing. It is an 'everything', which excludes everything. It is that of which spirituality speaks as Nothingness; but having which, you feel nothing; without which, you are lost.

Thank you.

2

Release of the Book Basics of Sahaj Marg Sadhana

This book, Basics of Sahaj Marg Sadhana, contains questions and answers given by Brother Durai during his various talks at various centres. You know, he has been doing excellent service, spreading the Mission very surely through Indian Oil Corporation. But for him, many centres today would not exist; the most outstanding example of his work is the Barauni Refinery, where we have two preceptors and more than sixty or seventy abhyasis today. We have abhyasis in Cochin, in the Indian Oil Area Refinery and others, we have in Madras, we have in Bombay, we have in Baroda, Mathura, like we have a military officer who started a centre at Ferozepur. Which only shows, we can come from any background — religious; we can come from any cultural background; we can come from any background or activity in this life, and yet be good abhyasis, good preceptors, and I hope, eventually, good disciples of the Master.

It is with this conviction that I have pleasure releasing this small booklet. I am also happy to tell you that it has been simultaneously published, under my permission, by Indian Oil Corporation as its own publication. So the Indian Oil Corporation will distribute its publication of three thousand copies through all the Indian Oil offices in India, perhaps some abroad, too. The Mission will distribute it here. It is sold at the price of five rupees. Please take benefit.

Thank you.

21 January 1991, Barauni

3

Serving the Master

In this idea of service mentioned, and judging from the speeches that you have had, yesterday and today, I find there is considerable confusion in this business of service. I prefer to speak in English because I can express myself better. I would like to start off with the idea that there are only three things which we have, which we can call ours: the Master, the Mission, and the Method — in that order. It cannot be the Method, the Mission, and the Master, or the Mission, the Method and the Master. But, it is the Master, the Mission and the Method. So when we talk of service, I would like to analyse how this concept of what we have, which we can only call ours, or only which we can call ours, affects the idea of service.

When we enter the Mission by taking sittings, starting abhyas, we are concerned solely with the method. Method and nothing else — practice, practice, practice — sadhana. In a sense, we are serving the method; in another sense, the method is serving us. So the newer abhyasis, some of the older abhyasis too, restrict their service by using the practice to the service of the self. I don't think you can serve a method except by practicing it. And the only beneficiary is yourself, the abhyasi. So the abhyasis start off by serving themselves, by using the practice. In a sense, being a little charitable, we can say it is service of the method.

When we have grown sufficiently in our abhyas, perhaps become preceptors, or even if you don't become preceptors, the idea comes slowly that we should serve the Mission. This idea that we should serve the Mission is itself an indication of a certain growth, spiritual growth, a growth in our awareness, a growth in

19 February 1991, Pune

our consciousness of what we have to do. Because we recognise that without the Mission, the method wouldn't exist. If we are not preceptors, it doesn't matter, because we can still serve the Mission in so many ways. People do. They give donations; they work for the Mission; they are typists, accountants, what have you. It is not important. So we can say abhyasis are now serving, or starting to serve, the Mission. It is still to a certain extent self-oriented. Because it is like a man who is travelling in a ship which springs a leak, and everybody rushes helter-skelter to plug up the holes in the ship, knowing that if we don't do so, the ship will sink and take us with it. It's a question of survival. If the Mission were not there, what would we do? So, that is the second stage in service, you see.

If we have the good fortune to be able to volunteer to work as preceptors, the service is just widening, in that we are now helping the Mission, serving the Mission — I don't like to use the word help — I would like you to understand that the two words 'help' and 'service' are not synonymous in my dictionary. They may look synonymous, they are not. Help has a certain arrogance — 'I' help — so the I is there, you see; and who are we to help? The Mission will run whether we exist or not. So if something can exist without us, it is pride and arrogance and boast to say that, "I am helping the Mission." "I am serving the Mission" — yes. So when we become preceptors — not everybody can, not everybody should, and no abhyasi should want to become a preceptor, because that is something which my Master said, "One who wishes to be a preceptor is unfit to be a preceptor."

So you see, the idea of service is becoming enlarged. Also it is becoming in a sense 'de-physicalised' at this stage, that now I sit and give transmission to our brothers and sisters; it is not physical work any more. I do the cleaning, which also is not physical. Perhaps we teach; that too is not physical. So there is a transcendence of the physical level of existence here. Because service to the Mission can only be physical — money, materials — the three 'M's, as brother Shah pointed out. The idea of 'men' comes only when we start interacting with human beings — serving them, in serving the

Master. So you see, service of the Mission is completely different to, and different from, service to the method.

When we come to the Master, the whole thing assumes a different complexion altogether. I think there is a sort of dimensional jump. How can you serve the Master? Who can serve the Master? Because, I have found in my association with my own Master, revered Babuji Maharaj, that there were many different types of people serving the Master. There were educated people, uneducated people, rich people, poor people, strong people, weak people — all the opposites were there. And when I looked into this with a certain desire to know, who is... not 'competent,' because nobody is competent; who can serve the Master, then the idea came that only one who loves the Master can serve Him. Method — self. Mission — a certain, shall we say, reduction of the self-interest, but still very much in a physical world, physical aspect of service: money, materials, etcetera. Preceptor — a widening of it, a certain de-physicalisation and a certain spiritualisation of our efforts. Master — now everything goes.

All concepts become invalid when we think of serving the Master. Can we serve him physically? Why not? If he needs it — yes. If his feet need to be pressed, I don't see what is wrong in pressing his feet. I mean in the Indian tradition it is supposed to be the highest service one can render to the Master. One cannot put your hand on the head of the Master — that is forbidden; but if you have to do an oil massage, that too is permitted. So people who distinguish between physical service of the Master and mental service of the Master, I think they are making a very grave mistake. Because service is all encompassing.

When you feed a man, is it physical? Yes, because you are giving his physical system physical food. If he is in dire need of that food and is likely to die, perhaps you are also enabling him to hold on to life itself. It is no longer physical service. It is enabling him to exist till his next meal, wherever it may come from, perhaps from yourself. So when something ceases to be physical and becomes something of a higher order, only those who are somewhat evolved

can understand. It is silly to think that pressing a master's feet is physical service; it may look physical. Or filling his hookah is a derogatory service, which the Brahmin should not do, because they won't touch tobacco. If the Master is a meat eater and you are a Brahmin, perhaps you have even to cut up his fish for him.

Remember the story of Lalaji Maharaj. One saint came. There was no child in the family. A servant maid, when she was asked by this saint, or rather she went to him and said, "You know, the lady of the house is pining for a child," and she found out that he liked fish; but they didn't have fish at home. She got it from a neighbour, cooked it, and Lalaji's mother offered it to him. What is fish, what is vegetable? — these are all our own interpretations.

I am not suggesting that we immediately go out to Kwality and start eating chicken. When in the service of the Master, he needs fish – well, you better somehow learn to cook that thing and give it to him when he needs it. If he needs his feet pressed, he will not ask — but if you are able to resonate with his being and find that this guy is being tortured by his pain and he needs some pressure — do it. If in writing a letter he has a problem with his language, to suggest a word is not by any means arrogance or disrespect to his knowledge. It is assistance at that moment; it is a service.

Because I know I had these problems. My Master used to ask me to correct his letters, *sahi kar do* [correct it]. It was his usual term, you see. And when I did it, many people thought that I was being extraordinarily arrogant. "How can the Master not know English?" Well he didn't know German, he didn't know French, he didn't know Timbuktu — I mean, he didn't know about twenty-seven thousand languages which are on this earth. That too is a very childish idea, that the Master can speak all languages. He cannot. He can understand because he delves into our minds. He knows what we are thinking — that is in his own language. If you are looking at a child and the child is looking at the toy with anticipation, you know the child wants that toy. You don't have to learn the language of the child. When a dog is wagging

its tail before you, and looking up at you piteously, you know it wants a walk. You don't have to speak dog language. When your wife looks at you in a particular way, you know she is angry; and when there are guests and she is shyly hiding behind the door and making gentle gestures, it means she wants you to go for dinner. If she brings out your coat when you are late, it means you are late for office, better get on with the job and get out! *Udyogam purusha-lakshanam* [being employed is the mark of a man], my wife used to say whenever I felt a little lethargic and I didn't want go for work. *Udyogam purusha lakshanam.*

So you see, language is only the crudest vehicle of mutual understanding. I repeat, it is the crudest vehicle. "Give me water," means help me to slake my thirst. Now, suppose the Master is going for a bath and says give me water and you bring a bottle of cold water from the refrigerator, it means you have not understood the situation at all. "Yes, but this is also water, brother." Yes, so is seawater. Why don't you give it to him to drink? So what I am trying to suggest is that to be able to serve such high personalities one has to develop an inner awakening, an inner understanding, of the need of the moment.

Service means fulfilling the need of the moment, whatever it may be. It may be physical, it may be material, it may be existential, it may be intellectual, it may be spiritual. If somebody dares to ask, "How can you say you can help the Master spiritually?" Because people are there who think the Master does not need help spiritually. But I can tell you, it is my personal experience, on two different occasions I have given a sitting to my Master at his request, or rather I should say, under his command. I was shocked myself. He said, "Parthasarathi, sit before me." "Yes, Master." I thought he was going to give me a sitting. He said, "Transmit to me for exactly one minute." I did. I mean there is no question of saying, "Oh, you are the Master, I am the slave; you are the transmitter, and I am the recipient." When he says you do it, you do it. He was utterly weak; he could not even stand. I had to lift him and put him there. Yet after this one minute sitting, he was like a rejuvenated being; and he looked at me and said, "You see

what you have done for me!" Now it was not my work; it was my service, but not my work.

So here we have to distinguish between service and work. Like we have to distinguish between service and help. I mean it would have been arrogant to think that I helped the Master to revive, you see, and to go about saying, "Tom-tom, I helped Master to revive when he was dying." Nothing of the sort, because it was His transmission, which for some reason he had to receive reflected out of me. He only knows why he wanted it. All his life he has told me that grossness is always accumulating even upon him. Because even though we are told not to attract grossness towards ourselves, yet inevitably something, when you are serious and concentrating on the work and your one-pointed attention is there, something comes inevitably towards you. All his life he has told me, "*Pada rehta hai* [It remains there] and Lalaji removes it periodically." On one occasion he asked me to clean him. The only thing I didn't do for him was initiation! [chuckles] I mean, if he had lived a little longer, perhaps he might have also said; and I would have had to obey.

So you see, not to question. If an abhyasi is really, from the heart, wanting to serve the Master, there must be no questions. "Why is this fellow asking me to do this and this and this?" There should be no doubt. "Why is this man asking me whether I should put 'could' or 'should' here? Does he not know even this fundamental difference between 'could' and 'should' or between 'want' and 'need'. Why does he ask me to correct it? Am I not his slave?" The moment we begin having these doubts, we doubt him, you see. The moment we doubt him — our spiritual fall. I don't think anything else can make us fall. I don't think there is anything in this universe which can make an abhyasi fall except the doubt of the Master. Because that is a lack of faith, that is a lack of understanding, that is a lack of understanding of his ultimacy, his divinity, his all-pervasiveness, his omnipotence, his omni-pervasiveness, his power, his lack of power, his Being, everything.

So I was rather surprised when brother Apparao talked about doubts. I mean, he is after all an abhyasi of many years, and to have a silly test — I remember, one of my old compatriots in Madras, many years ago, a cantankerous fellow in some ways; he came to me one day and said, "I am testing Babuji Maharaj." I said, "In what way?" He said, "You know, I have a job which is paying me so much and I am very happy in it. But I am applying for a lesser job with lesser pay, lesser job-satisfaction, lesser position, and I want to see if I get it." I said, "What will you do if you get it?" He said, "I will leave Babuji." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because I shouldn't get it. I am over-qualified for the job." I said, "Let me give you a better test than that." He said, "Yes, please. I would like to test him finally, once and for all." I said, "Go to the railway station, lie down on the railway track, and tell him, 'If it is your desire that I live, I will live. No train can cut me into two pieces.' That would be the ultimate test." But then we don't want to put our life in such a test. We only want to apply our foolishness, our stupidity.

Imagine a man — you know, suppose you are married, or you are going to be married to the most beautiful girl in town; you go and offer yourself to the ugliest person there and say, "Well, if he wants it." She will be willing to marry you, naturally. So these are called *visha pariksha*. I could have told him an even better test, "Take a little poison and swallow it. If your faith in the Master is total, if his *shakti* [power] is total, if his interest in your continuing existence is total, the poison cannot harm you." "Oh, how can you say that?" Well, there is always the example of Shiva who swallowed it and his *kantha* [throat] became *neela* [blue], you see. That's why he is called *Neelakantha*.

Even to test the Master — of course it is an act of arrogance — but if at all you wish to test him, put your life at stake. Then you can say, "I was a sincere tester, I was prepared to lose my life in this test." But to flippantly go around and say, "If in this temple, you know, the god is powerful, my car should stop." Well, your own thought power makes the car stop. I can do anything to your car if you want. This is not a boast.

If you want me to stop it somewhere, tell me, I will stop it at once. It doesn't mean anything. It is the power of my thought. It has nothing to do with my Master or his power. Babuji Maharaj said again and again, "Avoid negative thoughts, because they can come as you wish. If you are thinking of sickness, you become sick; if you are thinking of health, you become healthy."

And why do negative thoughts work better than positive thoughts? It was always a mystery. Because in positive thoughts we don't believe. Even astrology, you know. When an astrologer says, "Oh, you are going to find a wonderful handsome husband, six feet tall, who will have seventeen thousand rupees a month income," you shrug it off. But if he says, "Tomorrow you are going to get smallpox," you begin to act on that suggestion. "Ayyo, what happens if I get smallpox; my face will become this thing; I will not be able to marry." This negative thought we give much more force, much more power of our own self behind it, and we create that of which we are afraid. So when you are passing in front of a temple and you say, "If the god here is powerful, this car should stop," it is your power you are using to stop the car. But we ascribe it to that god in that temple and start worshipping him, forget Sahaj Marg. So what is this craziness all about?

So, for heaven's sake, get on with the job of meditation. We don't have all the time that we think we have. In another sense, we have much more time than we should ever have, because the spiritual *yatra* [journey] should have been completed in one second. We have the Master of Masters. He said, "If you can just turn your head from here to here, the whole thing is done." But nature gives us our span of life, in which he doesn't interfere. Even if you fulfil your goal, he says, "Okay, continue your existence. I don't want to snuff it out; because you have a family, you have an earthly existence, go through it — it doesn't matter." But you must remember his advice. What is wisdom? Live as if you are going to die the next moment. When should we serve the Master? Let us serve him now, because tomorrow he may be dead himself.

I know many people today who are beating their breasts in despair, disgust with themselves, anguish, that they did not serve

Babuji in his lifetime. "We lost the opportunity," they say. Why? Because, in one sense, the very idea that he is an eternal personality made us foolish. "He will be there forever, so let me serve him tomorrow, or day after. What does it matter, he is going there all the time, isn't it?" And he himself added fuel to our foolishness by saying, "I will live till 2007," and left a full quarter-century ahead, again depriving many people of the opportunity. Because they said, "Oh! 2007. Long time left, no hurry."

It is like people who come to me and say, "You know Mr. Chari, I am only thirty, what is the hurry for spirituality?" Only thirty? If you remember that before freedom, this country had an average life expectancy of twenty-seven; at thirty today, you are three years too much in this planet; at sixty, you are thirty-three years beyond where you should have been. It is a fallacy of human understanding, of human psychology, of human optimism, that the longer we live, the longer we expect to live. "*Nahin, nahin* [no, no] sir, nothing has happened to me. I am sixty-six, look at me." But the law of statistics says, the longer you live, the sooner you are going to die. It is the same thing with drivers, "No, no, I have been driving since eighteen years, never had an accident yet — touch wood." I said, "Touch here [gestures to the head]; this is the better wood of the two!" Because again, thinking in the way of probabilities, the longer you have not had an accident, the sooner you are going to have it.

Because life consists of two opposites: accidents, no accidents; health, sickness; money, no money; love, no love; everything, you see. The longer you have had one, the sooner you are going to have the other. Therefore, the need for balance; that I want neither this nor that. Or if I have to have both, let me have both simultaneously; let me learn to balance them together. Otherwise, we are going to run from extreme to extreme, from pillar to post, or like the *dhobi's kutta* from *ghar* to *ghaat* [the washerman's dog belongs neither at home nor at the waterside], and back again, all the time, nobody knowing where you are, or where the dog is.

I have known many sensible people, sane people, who thought, "I have time," suddenly they are mentally afflicted.

I have known rich people who wanted to build ashrams for Babuji Maharaj. *Karodpatis* [millionaires], yet hesitating to give. Now they are wailing, "Oh, in his time I was not able to give. Now you take it." Well, giving to the Mission today is not same thing as having given to the Mission in his lifetime. Because after all, the Mission is only a corporate body, and it has no appreciation, it has no depreciation. It exists. It's like painting your house. But had you given him, he would have been happy. He would have said, "Here is a *vyakti* or a person who is interested in my Mission to the extent of offering his health for its use, his wealth for its use, his service for its use." It's like feeding one beggar, because the beggar who came to your door yesterday, today lies dead, and the corporation man taking it away, "Oh, I could not feed him. Let me feed this beggar." Okay, it is good that some sense has dawned; but that fellow is dead!

There is a famous anonymous poem; I remember only a few sentences, "...I shall pass this way but once. Any good that I can do, therefore, or any kindness that I can show, let me show it now, for I may never pass this way again." This applies to us. When we see a beggar at the door, let us also think, "He is at my door now, he may never be at my door again. If I can do something for him, let me do it now, for he may never be here again for me to help." Preceptors should remember this — this abhyasi is here with me now, tomorrow I may not be here to give him a sitting. Therefore, let me not send him away, let me do my job now, so that I shall die with peace in my heart, if I have to die, that till the very last moment I was serving my Master. This is Service.

So you see, service needs not only muscular ability to *dabao* [press] one's feet, or well-filled pockets and wallets to distribute your largesse. It needs understanding. And as I have been trying to say again and again, true understanding is the understanding of the heart, because the head can only tell you, "No, no, don't do it." I have not known a single human being who has not, upon seeing a beggar, wanted to give five rupees, put his hand in his pocket and came out with ten paisa. Between the thinking and

the acting, it has become ten paisa from five rupees. We are like that. We are beggars ourselves, you see. Why not give that five rupees? You are not going to die. I mean to a man who is owning a car and a mansion and everything else, all the paraphernalia of the modern existence — five rupees is nothing. It is less than a *paan* [betel leaf]. I know people who eat *paans* for a hundred rupees — single *paan* for a hundred rupees; if they are even better off, a single glass of whisky for five hundred rupees — Royal Salut. And if you don't mind my saying so, I know a military officer who took premature retirement in Pathankot or Jammu, and he got his money, and he called his henchmen — I don't know what they call them, we call them tattoos [flunkeys], batmen, whatever it is, you see, usually other ranks fellows. And he said, "Bring me the most expensive prostitute in town." That was only way he could think of spending of his money.

So the way we spend our money is an indication of what we are. Somebody throws it on horses, somebody throws it on women, somebody throws it on drink, somebody throws it on ashrams. Somebody offers it respectfully to the Master — there is no throwing here. I know, because people used to come, and I used to sometimes want to kick them, you see, who used to throw a hundred rupee note at Babuji Maharaj, and then, you know, "*Jaisa aap chaho aap kharch kar lijiye* [spend the money as you like]." And Babuji would not touch that money. After he went he would say, "*Isko hata do* [remove this]." "*Kya karen* [what should I do]?" "Do what you like." So I used to make a receipt and send it. I mean it is an indignity to the Master to treat him as a beggar. You call him, on one side, the Master of the universe, the be-all and end-all of existence, the ultimate love, the ultimate kindness, the ultimate generosity, the very foundation of the universe, the *bhooma* [substratum of all creation, the ultimate]; and you have the arrogance to throw a hundred rupee note at his face, or a million rupees for that matter, or all your twenty-seven crores, if you have it. It must be offered as if a dog brings a bone and puts it at the feet of its Master — joyfully, respectfully,

expectantly, expecting him to take it and give it a pat. But we are not dogs, you see; we don't even have the manners of a dog, we don't have the obedience of a dog, and we don't have the love of a dog.

Therefore Babuji Maharaj has said, "G-O-D reverse it, it is D-O-G." Try to be a dog first, then you can be God. Faithfulness — like a dog. Love — one Master; it does not obey a second Master. Obedience — instant. The dog never asks, "Why are you asking me to go and fetch that stick, stupid fellow. Again and again you are throwing the same stick and 'Fetch,' and I am fetching it. What is this craziness?" It doesn't ask. He says, "Lie down," it lies. "Stay," it stays — inevitably, indefinitely.

I don't know how many of you are familiar with the literature of Mark Twain. There is a story about a pit dog that a man had trained to perfection, obedience — absolute. And he needed money. So he went out to the bazaar and said, "You know this dog will obey anything I say." One fellow said, "Hundred dollars, if it will permit me to cut off its paw." So he said, "Sit." It sat. Then he said, "Cut it." It didn't whine. Second fellow came, "Five hundred dollars, if it allows to off another paw." Like this he sacrificed the dog and got a thousand dollars. That's Mark Twain's story. The story is of how the dog, even when its feet are cut off by its master, would not whimper even. But it must have had a piteous look in its eyes, you see, and said, "Master, if that is your will, so be it." We, as abhyasis, are only, if at all, entitled to that piteous look in our eyes. "Is this my destiny, is this your wish? So be it! You want to crucify me? Do it."

You see, the idea of the Christian crucifixion — I don't think it is so important whether it is fact or fiction — has this attitude of surrender. "Yes, do what you will." But we are always trying to protect ourselves, enshroud ourselves, and give with the consciousness of giving, while claiming that everything we get is from the Master, "*Yeh bhi aap ka hai*, Babuji Maharaj [this is also yours, Babuji Maharaj]." I have known people saying, "This house is yours." In fact, there is a famous story of a man who gave

him his house in 1982, and people told me this man had donated his house to Babuji Maharaj, it's worth six lakhs of rupees, etcetera. So when I went to Shahjahanpur, I congratulated Babuji. He said, "*Us ne hame dhoka diya hai* [he has cheated me]." I said, "In what way?" Then Babuji said, "He said, 'The house is yours,' but he has not given it to me." Now, here there is difference between offering and giving. He offered, or he said, "This house is yours," which means, in fact, it is yours. He should have gone immediately to the lawyers and prepared a deed and handed it over to the Master, isn't it? It was only one of our usual mundane hypocrisies that, "This house is yours, this bed is yours, all the food here is yours." Knowing that this old man — toothless, comfortless, penniless — was not going to take from you anything.

People offered to him with impunity, knowing that he would refuse. If they had known, or suspected, that he would accept, I don't think they would have offered — not even a cup of tea. It is easy to offer anything and everything to someone who will not take it. It's very difficult to offer to somebody you know will take. That is why you don't give to beggars, but we offer to the masters; knowing that the Master will not accept; but the beggar will perhaps demand more.

So you see, our life is being solidly built on these hypocrisies, while all the time moralising, "*Satyam vada, dharmam chara* [speak the truth, be righteous]," etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, you know, nauseating repetitions of statements from the scriptures, nauseating repetitions of *paaraayanas* [scriptural recitations] in your wonderful puja rooms — arrogant, proud, boastful, hypocritical. And then we have people coming and saying, "Oh, I served Master you know, I helped to release some of the burden from his poor shoulders." "Poor shoulders," you see. The shoulders of Hercules could bear up one world, the shoulders of a Master like mine, perhaps bore the whole universe on his shoulders; and we have the arrogance to say we were bearing part of that load. We don't bear any load here. When a child goes out and takes the money from his father and buys something for that father from that money, the father

is immensely pleased, the mother is immensely happy. They both hug and kiss the child and say, "Look my child has bought me a present." Why? Why are they so happy? After all, it is the father's money. They are happy because the child thought of the parents, not of itself.

So the ultimate service is in thinking of the Master, not of yourself. It is not in what we do that we serve the Master; it is in what we think of the Master that we serve the Master. If you think he is a fool, well, for you he is fool, because when you say he is everything, he must also be a fool. When he is everything, he must also be sick. When you say he is everything, he must be the strongest and the weakest. When you say he is everything, he must be the biggest and the smallest, *anoraniyaan mahatomahiyaan* [larger than the largest and smaller than the smallest]. So why do you expect him to be only one and not the other? Why he should be wise and not a fool sometimes? Why he should always be strong and not weak sometimes? Why he should be always intelligent and not foolish sometimes?

We are cutting up the Master, as if it's a slice of bread, you see. But in His completeness, there must be the possibility of everything. And that possibility includes: foolishness, stupidities — according to our judgement, though according to his judgement it is a necessary thing for this moment of time. When Babuji played his tricks, and said, "I don't know anything. I am a *bevakoof* [fool], I have had not education," I know why he was doing it. It was to pamper some intellectual who came and said, "You see how humble Babuji is? I have a PhD and he recognised my ability." And after he goes, Babuji says, "*Kaise bevakoof humare paas aate hain* [what kind of fools come to me]?"

So you see, the idea of service is able to generate so much... I mean I could talk to you for hours, but it is not necessary. To understand service, one must finally understand the Master. To understand the Master, one must become like him. True service is only possible by one who has become like him, so that now you know his every need, his every mood, and respond adequately.

Till then it is either intellectual or physical — sometimes from the heart, sometimes from the head, sometimes selfish, sometimes selfless — but always less than what it should be.

The final concluding statement I would like to say is, until you have become capable of that order of service, do whatever you think is best, without thinking of yourself. Don't try to segment service into the physical, the mental, and the moral, and the intellectual, and the spiritual spheres. Offer him what you have. In the tradition of the Gita: *patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyaa prayacchati* [The one who offers a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water to Me with devotion]. If you have only water, give him water. But don't drink mango juice yourself and give him water. Leave it to him to refuse mango juice and take water in its place. Give him the best that you can. Give him yourself.

Thank you.

4

Sahaj Marg: The Way of Undoing

I... therefore criticize Maharashtra [laughter]. If I did not love Maharashtra and Maharashtrians, I don't care to criticize. In Tamil we have a saying, that you can beat your child but not your neighbour's child. *Kashala?* [Why?] Because you love your child. Therefore, we must try to develop that which we love. Those who love plants, try to develop plants; those who love animals, develop animals. We love abhyasis; we want to develop abhyasis.

Now, as Anil Deshpande said, one thing [break in tape] they said the same thing, and this stupid Maharashtrian, you know, he says, "Well, if Babuji said the same thing as Tukaram said, why should I follow Babuji and not Tukaram?" If Babuji had said something different, we can say, "*Baba*, this is different. Don't you see the difference? Follow this." Then they would say, "Aha! *Asayath kaye?*" [Is that so?] But, now they say, "*Arre*, same thing? *Khali Marathi madhe sangitla. Thumchay Guru Hindi madhe sangitla.* [He said it in Marathi and your Master said it in Hindi.] What is the difference? Why should I go to Babuji? Why not I stick to my Namdev and my Tukaram and my Abhanga, et cetera, et cetera?" This sameness is what is crucifying spirituality. Sometimes I wish it had been different.

The same thing with gods and goddesses. You say, "All gods are the same." The Muslim says, "Then why not I worship Allah in my mosque?" The Hindu says, "Why not I worship my thirty-three crore *devtas* [deities] in their temples? You say they are all the same." But they don't understand. If it is the same, why different temples? Why different *shlokas*? Why different *mantras*?

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Why not one? So you see, that they are the same is a big risk, is a big problem, is a big tragedy.

So I would say that we must go towards originality. Now, what is the originality? You see, Namdev did not create anything here, nor did Gyaneshwar. He only repeated in Marathi what has already been said in Sanskrit, in the Bhagavad Gita. Anybody who questions this is a fool and a liar. Everybody knows that they have sung the same things; what has come in Sanskrit, they are singing in Marathi because people of Maharashtra were to be taught. So naturally, you adopt the medium which they can understand. Therefore you speak in Marathi. In Tamilnadu, they speak in Tamil. In Hindi-speaking countries, they speak in Hindi. But the origin is the same Gita, the origin is the same Upanishads, the origin is the same Brahma Sutras.

So, as Babuji Maharaj says, "Go from diversity to unity. Go from artificiality to originality. Go from the tributaries to the source of the river." If this idea is taught again and again, whether it is in Maharashtra, or Bengal, or Kerala, or anywhere else, then they will understand the need, you see. It is like I tried to read, for instance, Rabindrananth Tagore's work in English. No doubt it is good, but it is not satisfying. If you read it in Bengali, it is different. You must go to the original in every case. Why do people go to the origin of the Ganges? Why not bathe in the Hooghly in Calcutta? Why do we go to Rishikesh, Hardwar? Because there it is the beginning, and further. So what we must tell these Maharashtrians, *my* Maharashtrians, "Go back to the *moola vastu* [original thing]. Don't be stuck with these translators." Because these Maharashtrian saints were translators; they did not originate anything.

Like today, when I speak, I only speak what my Master said. If you want to know really what he said, you must go to his works in the language in which they were written, because he is no longer available for discussion. The best thing would have been to hear from him direct. If you put it like that, people will understand. But if you try to tell them, "Baba Namdev is no more with you.

Tukaram is dead." They will say, "What is this? They are eternal saints; these people are murdering them. Sahaj Marg is murdering our saints. *Nakomala* [I don't want it]."

We have this even within Sahaj Marg. When you talk of a living guru, they say, "What? Does it mean Babuji is dead, or is Lalaji dead?" I mean, how can God die? But in a sense, when we speak of the degradation of society, we speak of the downfall of values, we speak of corruption, bribery, violence, we say, "God *is* dead," in a certain sense. But it is not God who is dead. It is God in Man, in the human, who is no longer active. He is not dead. He is there in a state of coma, because we have anaesthetised Him and put Him to sleep. Now we have to awaken that fellow.

This awakening is the process of spiritual practice. When the Master first gives you a transmission, cleans you up, and puts that light into your heart, he is waking that sleeping person up. "*Jaago! Jaago sonewale.* [Sleeper awake.]" There is a famous, I think, *geet* [song], (abhyasi: "*Suno meri kahani*..., [Listen to my story.]") Now who is to listen if he is sleeping? So we have to awaken Him. Then, as He wakes up, He takes over and we must become quieter and quieter until we don't exist. So, this is the process, you see. Like in firewood, as the Veda says, the fire is already in it, but it has to be awakened, it has to be kindled by setting a matchstick to it; then it burns. How long can the matchstick burn? But without a matchstick, the firewood can never burn.

So you see, the Guru's role is precisely to awaken this sleeping divinity inside you. Then *you* have to co-operate by allowing that awakened divinity now to take charge, as the Master of the situation, as the God who rules from within. For Him it is immaterial whether you become a saint or a sinner. He doesn't care; He couldn't care. How could He care? Because He says, "Well, I am what I am. Nothing in this universe can change; it is me. That sinner too is me, this murderer too is me, this rich man too is myself. That fellow up in the heavens is also myself." But what is this whole thing about spirituality about? It is to realize that oneness of everything, the divinity of everything. And in that, knowledge has no play.

We all know what is truth. We all know what is health. "*Satyam vada* [speak the truth]," it has been said from Vedic times. But we say, "No, no, sir. If you tell the truth today, we cannot exist." Truth means danger. "Be honest with your income tax." "No, no, sir. Nothing will be left. This government, you know. And then what do they do with the taxes they collect?" See, these two questions are the justifications for all tax assessees who don't pay their taxes. Now, why do these arguments come? — very seemingly applicable, seemingly relevant to the situation. Because the head works and not the heart. The head says, "Don't be a fool. Governments are fools; governments are stupid; governments waste money; they aggrandise themselves. The ministers in government charter private planes to go to Norway to attend the funeral of the king, spending one crore [ten million] rupees for that trip. So why should we pay these taxes?" That is very convincing. When you use the head, everything is convincing. The ultimate argument is, "Sir, today everybody does it. If I am the only one who doesn't do it, I will suffer. What do you expect me to do?" We have no answer.

But if you say, that blighter sitting upstairs in heaven, He says, "Tell the truth. I will look after you," He says, "Lead the right life, I will protect you," He says, "Let me work through you. Your success is assured because it is *my* work," should you not believe in Him? Don't believe in human beings, don't believe in governments, don't believe even in saints and *sadhus*. Believe in Him. *Sarva dharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam vraja,* it says in the Gita. Throw to the dogs every damn thing you have ever had. What is Dharma? Throw it away. "I am the Master of Dharma," he says, Lord Krishna, *Sarvadharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam vraja. Aham tvaa sarva paapebhyo mokshayishyaami ma shuchah.* [Leave all dharmas and surrender to Me alone. I shall relieve you from all sins, do not grieve.] "Don't doubt," that the Lord Himself says, if you believe in Him. Now where does Tukaram and Namdev, or Kabir, or anybody come into this? As Babuji said, "He alone is the Master; everybody else on earth is a representative of sorts." So ultimately we have to trust in God and do the right.

Now this is what Sahaj Marg also says. He is the Master; the Master on earth is His representative. He works through him, he interprets His instructions, he offers His training, he gives His knowledge, and he assures you of His success. Now, that God cannot work for us; the Ultimate *Paratattva* [Ultimate essence] cannot work for us. He is the Master of the universe. He is larger than the universe; He is larger than anything that you can ever conceive of. So we go to Him in His sub-atomic form, who is residing in our heart, who is in a sense 'me', for each one of us. He is in me, therefore, He is interested in me. That God is isolated, far away, couldn't care less about his *srishti* [creation]; because He can make *srishti* again and again.

The Puranas say that Lord Narayana is sleeping in His eternal sleep, what they call *yoga nidra*, and with every outgoing breath of His, universes are created — not just one universe — multiple universes are created. And as He withdraws His breath inside, they are destroyed. It is not one universe. Universes by the millions are being created with every breath, are being annihilated and taken back into him with every breath. This is the fate of universes. What are we to speak of ourselves? So that Master of the universe has nothing to do with us. But this fellow sitting inside me, as the *antaryamin* [inner Self], He is my inner master, who is interested in me because He is in me. Even when you live in a rented house, you are interested in the welfare of that house. You keep it white-washed; you keep the roof clean; you keep it strong, so that if you walk on it, it will not fall. If it is not, you complain to the owner. Now, the owner is the outer Master, you are the inner Master, in between is the house. Now, this fellow is very much interested in me, because He is interested in Himself. So we appeal to Him, "Lord, you are my Master." Therefore, Babuji says, "Internalise the external Master."

Now, from a disinterested, totally unaware of the situation type of god, here you have one who is within you, who is aware of your every movement, of your every breath, of your every thought — from within. And as these get grosser and grosser, He subsides deeper and deeper into sleep. The ultimate

grossness is when this *antaryamin* is totally asleep; now there is no inner voice, no guidance. Then comes the Master, with his divine touch awakens. But then we have to do the next job, you see. With the awakening of the divinity in us, the Master's job is in a sense — the real job is over. Then it is a question of putting more *koyla* [charcoal] on the fire — that *we* have to do. This is why we have to meditate, we have to co-operate, and we have to go for sittings. See, suppose a shop is closed and you want milk for the baby; you go again and again until it is open. We cannot say, "Oh! The shop is closed." "Why did your baby die?" "*Kai karaiche?* [What to do?] That fellow didn't open his shop. I went six times." You must have gone the seventh time, eighth time if necessary. I'm not trying to justify Kulkarni's absence. But when we are at stake, when my life is at stake — suppose I am very sick and I need the doctor, I telephone again and again until I can get that fellow. He is not waiting for me; I have to wait for him. If necessary, you have to go and sleep at the preceptor's house — not inside, outside on the steps.

Babuji Maharaj once went all the way from Shahjahanpur to Fatehgarh. He reached at nine o'clock at night, on a winter night, bitterly cold. He had his clothes like this, you see, his usual dhoti and kurta. But he did not want to disturb his Master. He did not knock on the door and say, "Open the door! Give me! Where is my blanket? Where is my *gaddi* [mattress]?" Nowadays abhyasis ask, "*Hamara kamra kaunsa hai, Babuji?* [Where is my room, Babuji?]" I have heard abhyasis asking. Like a dog he slept on the stone steps of his Master's house, outside. Next morning, Lalaji opened the door and said, "Ram Chandra, *raat bhar yahin soye rahe?* [Did you sleep here all night?]" He did not reply, because you cannot say yes, you cannot say no. He just kept quiet. Then he said, "*Aao* [come]." See this is the sort of devotion, *bhakti*. To whom? Not to the Master; to yourself. If he slept there like a dog, in that cold, perhaps zero degrees Celsius, and did not freeze to death, that was the Master's grace. If he slept there, knowing that he could have frozen to death, that was his desire for divinisation. How many of us can do it?

So you see, unless that craving inside you is so strong that life is to be thrown away for it. Babuji Maharaj has said, "If you cut your head and throw at His feet, still it is too cheap." Life cannot earn this thing. One life cannot earn it; a million lives may never earn it. Then what can earn it? It is love for Him who is within. Because He is your Self. In loving Him, you love your Self. He, who does not love Him, does not love himself or herself. This is the ultimate tragedy of today's life: that we hate ourselves, therefore we hate everything, we destroy everything.

The only way of loving Him is first to recognise His existence. How can you love a lover who is not before you? "No, no, I am a lover, sir." Who is your lover? "Oh! I don't know." Where is he? "I don't know." What is his name? "I don't know. Why are you asking these foolish questions? He has not come yet." Then how can you love? So, to love yourself, this Self has to be awakened. That needs the guru. Then like a child, you know, you may love a child, but that is not a love affair. You cannot love a baby of three months old. Nor can you love a girl of three years. That fellow has to become an adult; you must let Him grow. Grow means what? The Sleeper awakes. Now you love Him with all your heart, and then there is some meaning in that love. It will have some fruition somewhere. It will lead to some union at some time. And then your whole problem of life is solved.

So you see, don't let language barriers and saintly barriers come between you and your divinity who is inside. Throw away all these fellows — translators. They were nothing more than translators. With all respect to Gyanadeva and all your wonderful saints here. And to worship Shivaji Maharaj, it is the ultimate stupidity, you see. He was a king, and not a very good king at that. And a fellow who killed his enemies by ridiculous means: cheating them, hugging them. What is all this? *Chhatrapati?* [Emperor?] *Kiska Chhatrapati hai?* [Whose emperor?] I am also a *Chhatrapati* when I have an umbrella in my hand. I am my own *Chhatrapati*!

So you see, these false allegiances, false loyalties, because we are ignorant of the true merit of these people. It is like a

child with a small stone, saying, "Mummy, mummy, look at my diamond." Of course you will not disappoint the child, you will say, "Yes, my dear. But, look at this, which your grandmother gave me." "Oh, it is so sparkling." "Yes." "This is not diamond?" "Well, a diamond of sorts. But this is the true diamond." Now the child learns. Without disparaging the stone, yet you are able to teach what is a diamond.

So we don't disparage, you see. But we say they translated into your language, because you did not know other languages. It is the famous question of the buffalo telling the Vedas — what a miracle! You can make a gramophone record play the music of Lata Mangeshkar or Sant Kabir Das. You know a mere plastic disc can play music at command, and you are talking of a buffalo reciting the Vedas. After all, it is a living thing, isn't it? Today modern technology can make anything speak; he could make only a buffalo speak. My Master says, we can make anything speak, anywhere at any time — provided that thing is willing to be transformed into something which can speak with the voice of God, for God, by God.

So, I urge all of you to forget that you are Maharashtrians. You are born Maharashtrians, don't die Maharashtrians. Don't die *merely* Maharashtrians; it would be a tragedy. Babuji Maharaj, when he was asked, when he came back from Europe in 1972 after his first visit, they said, "You must be happy to be back home." He said, "I don't understand." "No, no, Babuji, you are back in India." He said, "Everywhere for me is India." He was not a citizen of Uttar Pradesh, or of Shahjahanpur, or even of India, or even of this world. If he had perchance gone to the moon, he would have said the same thing there, "It is my universe." A man who thinks only of Karad, or Sangli, or some place, as his home, and of Maharashtra as his state, he is a stupid fool imprisoning himself within the small cage of a state. If he becomes an Indian, he has enlarged his cage. If he becomes a citizen of the world, now the cage is almost not there; it is so big that you cannot say it's any more a cage. If you become a citizen of this universe and say," The whole world is mine; this universe is mine," then you

are qualified to become, in some way, something approaching the Master of the universe.

We have to throw away. See, in Sahaj Marg, as Babuji said, "It is the *way of undoing*." I have to forget I am a man. You have to forget you are a woman. We have to forget we are human beings. We have to forget we are Maharashtrians, Indians, black, white, et cetera. Until having forgotten and thrown off all these identities, finally what remains is the essence, and that is divine. It is like throwing off your clothes, you become naked. Remove your skin — skeleton left. Throw it away; what else is left? That is Divinity. So you see, Sahaj Marg demands that progressively we throw off things which give us identity. What are you? "I am an Agarwal." You are only an Agarwal? "Yes, yes, I am a millionaire." You are only a millionaire? "I am a millionaire Agarwal." You are only a millionaire Agarwal? What else are you?

So you see, if I am something, I am only that. If I am nothing, I am everything. This is the way — from something to nothing, or as we put it in Sahaj Marg, to Nothingness, which is the essence of divinisation, Divinity itself. That is our way; that is our goal. In this, anything which is a barrier, has to go — anything. Language, culture — these are very superficial expressions of our human existence. Superficialities must go first. I cannot take off my underwear without taking off my shirt. So the superficial shirt has to go first; then the next superficial shirt. Then, if there is a third thing, that I have to throw away. So what is my most superficial identity? My statehood, my name, my language, my culture, of which you are so boastful, so proud — these have to go first. And anything of which we are proud and boastful is a bigger danger than those of which you are not proud and boastful. Because those things of which we pride ourselves become our anchors of existence. When we have nothing, we hold on to our culture.

Every fool talks of Maharashtrian culture. What does he know of its culture? I would not be wrong if I say I know perhaps more about Maharashtra and Maharashtrian culture than most of the Maharashtrians here, even though I don't speak the language.

Why? Because at its base the culture is the same everywhere. Like at the base, all human beings are the same everywhere. They have the same desires, the same needs, the same aspirations. What distinguishes us? The language in which we put it. One says, "*Mujhe pyaas lagi hai;*" another says, "I am thirsty;" Tamilian says, "*Enakku daahama irukku.*" We all mean the same thing.

So you see, differences must go; at least within our society of Sahaj Margis. Here there should be no Maharashtrians, and no Uttar Pradeshian, no Agarwal, and no Marwari, and no Bengali. This is the first requirement. Because if what we are trying to destroy outside, we keep inside, we are killing ourselves. It is better it is outside and not inside. We have to clean ourselves first; we have to change ourselves first; then we can change the universe. He who cannot change himself, can change nothing else.

Thank you.

5

Surrender and Obedience

He who puts others into trouble, will be himself put in trouble. [laughter] This is a clear manifestation of the truth of that law. I've been asking everybody to speak, and now I am compelled to speak myself. I have been speaking more than I should, perhaps, recently. I say this because I know Babuji kept quiet, at least in public. Because anything you speak about can be interpreted in several ways. In what way he wanted us to interpret, or to understand, we don't know. It is like giving a lock to a child, but not giving him the key. So we are always talking about love and surrender, but the key has not been given to us. So we are a big lock and we are trying key after key after key; and thinking that all the keys are keys, so why not this key open this lock.

So it is always a problem. You know, in every house we have a bunch of keys, old keys and several old locks, and often when we are about to go on a journey, and we need a lock and a key, we spend frustrating hours trying to match one lock with its key, and we never find it. Finally we go out and buy one lock, or more locks, and add to the future confusion. Next time you have more keys and more locks to deal with, and end up by buying another lock. So this is how it goes on, you see. Every time you try to solve a problem, we create more problems. I think in science it is one of the axioms that a solution breeds a problem; every solution is only the foundation for the next problem. In another way you can say every problem is the foundation for its solution, so problem-solution, problem-solution, it goes on and on; there's no end to this.

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So as long as you are thinking about these things, and conceptualizing and, as one young fellow said, "Fantasizing," we are neither going to have a problem, nor a solution, which will be final. The problem is to find a final solution. We only have temporary solutions. *Ipso facto* the problems are also temporary. This is when it becomes mere life, you see. Today's problem is tomorrow's solution; tomorrow's solution is the basis for the day after tomorrow's problem. Like today — what you eat, if you don't digest and excrete, you become constipated. If you become constipated, you don't eat; then you need medicine. You know, we have seen this cycle in Babuji's life. Three days of diarrhoea followed by three days of constipation, again three days of diarrhoea; he was going like a sine curve, you see. Which only means, that in the physical existence there can be no static point. And when we look at things like surrender and love, we are often looking at it from this physical standpoint — a physical heart, a physical love, a physical person loving another physical person.

The whole problem lies in this problem of identity; *I* must surrender. When we can realize that in that statement, '*I* must surrender,' the answer is there, you see. [chuckles] '*I*' have to go? Now, if this is taken in a physical sense, then every suicide would be a highly spiritual person. Because '*I*' am gone, or has gone. He has killed himself, or herself, and you should say that is the highest sacrifice. But the problem is to live and not to exist. Because life cannot be extinguished, life is something which is eternal. But what is it that is extinguished? When we say life is existence and existence is life, we cannot surrender life, we cannot surrender existence. In between the two there is something which says life exists. That what says, is the 'me' who has the intellect to say that 'I' in this life, am existing. Now this is too philosophical, too much of verbose argument and discussion. The secret is to find the way. Whether we can find it in sadhana is a disputable point.

I think the whole story of Vishwamitra, you see, was this: that he was too intellectual; and when you are intellectual you say, "I know." As Dorit said, "Our life has been a life of wishes." All the time she has also been using the prayer, "Our wishes are putting bar to our advancement." Now for a lady, very intellectual, very

well developed, professionally capable, not to have understood that these wishes are putting bar to our advancement, though repeating the prayer day in and day out, shows the hiatus between thought and activity, between principle and practice, between understanding and recognition of the truth. If it is merely intellectual understanding, "Yes, yes, I know my wishes are putting bar to my advancement, but I have a wish for..." — wish for what? "Wish to love the Master" — that's also a wish. "Wish for liberation" — that is also a wish. "Wish to surrender" — that is also a wish. And Master did not say, "Some of our thoughts, or some of our wishes, are putting bar to our advancement." He said, "Our wishes are putting bar to our advancement." It was a final statement, you see. So *every* wish is a bar. Why should I have a wish to surrender or a desire to surrender? I must *do* it. I wish to pass my examination. Who says this? Only those who have failed. Because one who passes never says, "I wish to pass my examination." Only the failure talks about wishes. I wish to succeed; that means he is a failure. I wish to tell the truth; that means he is a liar. I wish to be honest — same thing.

So you see, every wish is an indication of the existence of its opposite. "Doctor, I wish I could sleep," since you are unable to sleep. And now why is a wish putting a bar to our advancement? If you go into it a little deeper, because every time we go on making this wish, wish, wish, we are looking at the negative and not at the positive. "I wish I could sleep, I wish I could sleep!" If you are going on, your mind is working like crazy and preventing the very sleep which you wish you could have. Therefore, the secret of dropping wishes; not negating — it is not necessary — just drop the wish. Don't think of success — you will succeed. If you go on thinking of success, you are going to think of failure; because the two are two sides of the same coin. Why do we think of success? Because we are afraid of failure, isn't it?

Nobody who is not afraid of failure thinks of success. Only he is not afraid of failure who knows that we have nothing to worry about. All the time we talk of faith in the Master, and he does it with faith, and all the time I talk of, "I must succeed,

I must sleep, I must be healthy," this, this and this. So a wish is a direct indication of lack of surrender. "*I* wish." I remember one of my friends who used to be an abhyasi for some time, his telegraphic address for his company was 'his wish.' But [chuckles] it was only a telegraphic address, nothing more. What is the meaning of putting a telegraphic address 'his wish,' 'my wish,' 'your wish,' its all nonsense, you see. Because when I say, "His wish must prevail," I am still conscious of myself. There is still the 'he' and the 'me,' or the 'he' and 'I,' if you would like to be more grammatically correct.

So I think the final... if at all we have to reach that condition, there must be no consciousness of the Master, in the sense of being a separate person from myself. "No, no, Babuji said..." you see, it's all right, Babuji was a person. It is like, you know, in Uttar Pradesh they are still talking of Rama Rajya. Not that old Rama Rajya, a newer Rama Rajya with a newer Rama, born in a new Ayodhya *mandir* [temple], we create all over again for us. It is stupid, it is not even childish, it is stupid. Because in history nothing repeats itself. They say, "History repeats itself." It is crazy. It may appear to repeat itself.

It is like saying, "Days repeat themselves." Days don't repeat themselves; it's always a new day. Every day is different from the preceding day. Just because the sun shines, it doesn't mean it's the same day. One day you are alive; one day you are dead. One day you are healthy; one day you are sick. One day you are rich; one day you are poor. How can the day be the same? The day can be the same only when you are unchanging, whatever may be the day or the night. Then you can say my day is the same. For me it doesn't matter whether it is day or night, because I am unchanging. That the sun is shining and will continue to shine, the moon will rise, you know, in its time and we will have a full moon in twenty-eight days, and that the rains will follow rains in the monsoon season — the predictability and the unpredictability of nature — all this has nothing to do with an unchanging world, or an unchanging universe. My universe can be unchanging only when I am unchanging — I cannot change

any more. I have changed, till I reach a state which is a changeless state. That is the final state. We always talk of God realization, and divinization, and all that; it's very misleading. We don't know what is God. Then how can we realize? Babuji says, "God cannot be known. He can only be felt." Then where is the question of realization?

So you see, too much of these conceptual ideas: "I must know God, I must see God, I must feel God, I must taste God," what else? The true eternity is where one cannot change. He is eternal because there is no change in Him. Everything that changes is temporal. Therefore, days change, because days change into night, into day, into night, into day — eternally. Therefore, it is not eternal. The sun will shine until it goes away. Therefore, it is not eternal. The moon cannot shine when the sun doesn't shine. Therefore, it is not eternal. Galaxies can collide and destroy each other. Therefore, they are not eternal. The whole universe may collapse into itself. Therefore, it is not eternal. Then what is eternal? That, when living in this changing universe, changes itself and therefore becomes the centre of an endlessly changing universe that rotates or moves. That alone can be called eternal. Because it *is* and it will always be as it was.

Now, I believe surrender means achieving this changeless condition. Because we one day surrender and one day we un-surrender again. Because we are oscillating between un-surrender and surrender. Because everybody thinks we have surrendered today. Next day you find you have not surrendered again. Third day you say, "No, no, today my surrender is better." How can there be stages of surrender? It must be distinguished, or we must distinguish, between a state of obedience and a state of surrender. Surrender need not be obedient; obedience need not be surrender, and generally never is surrender. As my brother said, "Generally obedience is because of imposed authority."

We obey, because we are afraid to disobey. Later on we obey, because we love the person who orders us around, or gives us instruction, or guidance, or a sitting. But still there is a difference

between him and me, or him and I. So still it is obedience — one obeying, the other telling you to obey. Not imposing, but shall we say, persuading. Later on it may become obedience, because now I know that I *must*. The obedience comes now from inside. But there must be a stage when this obedience becomes, not disobedience, but non-obedience obedience. Now I'm not conscious that I am obeying. I am what I am. In this way alone I can behave.

If somebody says, "Oh! You are a very obedient disciple." You must say, "But what? In what way?" You must be really surprised that he says you are obedient. "In what way am I obedient?" "Yes, but are you not following what the Master says?" Of course, but that is only in appearance. "How can that be?" Because what the Master says now is being said from inside myself, you see. I say that this must be the true behaviour, therefore I obey my Self. Suppose he says something which is different from what my inner Self says. Therefore, Babuji Maharaj said, "Even when the Master orders, examine it carefully, decide whether it should be obeyed or not, and then obey." Because, in the history of religion and spirituality, so called pseudo-spirituality, there have been great organizations with enormous stress on obedience, that people have had their heads cut off, arms cut off, feet cut off, all from a mistaken idea of obedience.

There have been so-called spiritual systems in India where the guru said, "Take off his hand," and the disciple was willing to do it. So Babuji said, "Be careful." Because if the guru is the wrong guru, he can give you the wrong order; and if you are merely obedient, you will be executing something which will get you into trouble. This was the problem with the Nazis in the Second World War. Enormous obedience, perfect discipline, but then they had to face the courts. And some of them were condemned. So obedience is, in my mind, you know, a very, very, very, lower order of the idea of surrender. It is a servant. One who obeys, is a servant. At the best, a good servant; at the highest, a wonderful servant like Hanuman.

Therefore, Babuji said, "I don't make slaves, I make masters." We must obey, as masters; that is, we have every right to disobey, but yet we obey, because He who tells me from outside is my Self. So now there is no more obedience and disobedience. There is behaviour in the only possible way, which is neither right nor wrong, being the only possible way. There is no choice. That's why I have always told our Western abhyasis that in spirituality, until you understand that you are in a choiceless situation, in the beginning it is frustrating. They said, "But how can it be? I must have a choice to do what I wish." Well, then you are in a wishful situation. And our prayer says, "Our wishes are putting..." "Yes, but how can I go ahead without wishing for something which is good." That means you are still conscious of good and bad. You are still in the world of duality. "Yes, but Chari, they exist." That means you are still existing within this existence, and you are still a slave to it.

So you see, our very idea of the fact, of the factual conception, that I have a choice, means I am still a slave of a duality-ridden world in which I am still a prisoner. It is like a bird in a cage, which says, "I can get out if I wish." Knowing that its wish is futile, that somebody else has to open the cage, let it out, and keep it out. Because I know birds which have been let out, cage is still open, they have been tamed too long and they come back into the cage, out of the fear of the outer. They are afraid of freedom.

So most of us are slaves, not because we are bound to be slaves, or because we are destined to be slaves, but because, really, we are afraid of freedom. We are all the time talking of something of which we are afraid. Therefore, we cling even to the Master. Therefore, we think of him all the time. Physically, his presence is a protection; mentally, the thought of him is a protection; spiritually, He is the only protection. As long as we continue to think in this way, we are still slaves, because *I* need protection. And when I think *I* need protection, I am still fear-ridden, I am a slave of my fears, of the possibility of so many things. So how can you be a disciple?

How can you be a spiritual person, that even after twenty years I say, "Babuji protects me. Babuji guides me." Yes, perhaps Babuji protects you. Why? From what? From which destiny do you need protection, knowing that you are the creator of your own destiny. Are you then seeking protection from yourself? Very good. Because we are our own enemies. But till when? Till the inner self and the outer self are at one with each other. They are two separate things. Now when the two have merged into one, either by one being dissolved and only one remaining, or by two blending together and becoming one, then of what should I be afraid? From whom should I seek protection? Because now I am my own protection, I am my own Master, because my Master is in me, whereas previously I had kept him outside. Therefore, there was the danger that he might go and leave me alone, like a child is afraid of its mother leaving him. I believe that at that stage, the idea of surrender must disappear. Because I never heard my Master saying that he had surrendered to Lalaji. I never heard it. The only statement he makes is, "When I went to his feet, I never looked at anyone else after that." I don't think he has ever said anything about surrender, or that he surrendered, or that Lalaji accepted his surrender, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. I have not found it in the literature. If anybody finds it, please tell me where is it. In my hearing he has never said it. Why? Because for him the two are one, you see.

In Denmark in 1972, when he was answering a question about, "People call you Master. Who are you really?" He said, "When I speak, I don't know who I am, whether I am God, or it is Lalaji, or it is myself." That is the real state of surrender — no consciousness of difference between God and myself; no consciousness even that I am separate from Him. No consciousness, *this is the most dangerous — that I am God,* you see, because there have been too many persons who have said, "I am god. Follow me." There have been cranks, crazy fellows, dangerous criminals, out to swindle a gullible public. I think this is the most important reason that Babuji said, "God cannot say he is God, because he cannot be conscious of His Divinity." If He says, "I am God," then there is something which is not God.

So, you see, that is a stage of total lack, or annihilation, of self-consciousness. "Who are you, Babuji?" "Well, you decide." "Some people call you Master." "Well *they* call me Master." "What are you?" "I am what I should be." "What is that?" "I don't know. It is not necessary. You find out." It's like going and asking your flower in the garden, "What is your perfume?" "It's a perfume? What perfume?" "No, no, I smell." That is your problem, you see. Can a rose say, "I am smelling like a rose." Then it is not a rose. It must be a paper flower with something sprayed on it. Then it can say, "I am smelling like a rose." Because it is not natural to it. A paper jasmine can say, "I am smelling like a jasmine." A doll can look like a person, or a human being. When you say, "Oh! It looks like a human being," it means it is not a human being. Isn't it?

So a rose cannot know it is a rose; a jasmine cannot know it is a jasmine; nor can God know He is God. It is the very nature of the Self that Self-knowledge is impossible. I am talking of the capital 'S' Self. You know, self imagines it in so many ways. It imagines it is a failure; it imagines it is successful; it imagines it is a great thing; it imagines it is a small thing, sometimes sweet, sometimes this, sometimes that, sometimes miserable, sometimes ecstatic. When there is a change in our state of experiencing this world, then it means that we are still here —very gullible, very susceptible, open to all attacks. When we have reached — whatever it is you call it — the goal, or the Master, or divine existence, or anything you like — there cannot be a change in your state, therefore there cannot be a change in your experience. Such a person cannot know the difference between two people. He cannot know the difference between two places. Because his mind no longer goes by difference. It is like the lighthouse; it cannot know of darkness. Because wherever it turns, it only finds illuminated objects. And if you ask it, "Where is the darkness? What is darkness?" It will say, "What darkness?" "No, no, look there," and the lighthouse looks there and says, "Where? Where is darkness?" So you see, for light, there is no darkness. For good, there is no evil. For God, there is no devil. These are our creations. Babuji said, "Destroy your creation and let His creation come into existence." That should be our prayer.

Thank you.

6

The Need to be Truthful

For the benefit of those who don't know Tamil, I would like to speak in English. I think many people are expecting to hear something in English first. First of all, I would like to say I am happy that Trichy centre is waking up. Yesterday many people were praising Trichy centre. It is one of the oldest centres in India. Those who know something of the history of the Mission, you'll know that Hyderabad centre was first, followed by Raichur, followed by Tiruchirapalli.

Now, it is one of the bad aspects of our civilization, Indian culture, that we praise what is old, just because it is old. And so we have been praising Trichy centre and Hyderabad centre and Raichur centre, that they are old centres; Babuji came here first in 1955, 1957, 1959, et cetera, et cetera. So I believe that an old man should be better than a young man, who should be better than a child, who should be better than a baby. An old fruit should be ripe, should taste nice, should not damage our constitution, should be worth eating. Young things are *kaccha* [raw] as we say in Hindi — untasty; if you eat a raw mango you will get sores. So we have all these ideas; but we forget that old must also be gold. If old people are to be respected only because they are old — yes, of course, we should respect age; I am not saying we should disrespect. But we should not go on praising and saying, "He is an old man; he is a wonderful man; he is a great man." An old man isn't necessarily great; a young man is not necessarily un-great.

So yesterday, when I heard all this praise about Trichy centre, I was a bit sad that they were not really speaking the truth.

10 March 1991, Tiruchirapalli

Because ever since I have known this centre, which is quite a long time, it has not developed. Captain Ramaswamy was speaking yesterday; and he told me that S. K. Rajagopala Iyengar has done good work here, then he went away; then things became quiet; then somebody else came — he did work for some time, then he went away; again things became quiet. Now Sadasivam has come, things are rising again. I hope it would not become quiet again. Because, if once in fifteen years some people are going to be transferred here, and there is going to be some activity in Trichy centre, and we are going to have a gathering like this, and praise each other and pat ourselves on the back, we are only indulging in lies and hypocrisy. Yesterday, I wanted to know how many Trichy abhyasis are here. That there are five hundred and twenty-five people here is, of course, a matter for happiness; but how many are there from Trichy here? Arumugam Pillai is the eldest. He is here, I am very happy, you see. At least a few of the old people are still here. I am very grateful for that. But one Arumugam Pillai does not make a Trichy centre. Where are the other Trichy abhyasis? Where is the Trichy Centre? Where is an ashram? What is the activity at this centre? Does it happen? One K. Subramaniam; one S.K. Rajagopal Iyengar — you know they say in English, "One sparrow does not make a summer."

In Hindu culture we mistake etiquette and courtesy as the need to praise each other, even if it means telling lies. When we meet we say, "You are a great man," he says, "You are a great man." It is what in South India we call a mutual admiration society. Now, that is too much in our society. You see, we are always praising each other, patting each other on the back, "Oh you are great," "You are greater," "No, no, you are greatest," you see. We carry this nonsense even to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma says, "Vishnu is the highest." Vishnu says, "Shiva is the highest." Shiva says, "No, no, Brahma is the highest." Then we have Mohini, and this and that, and so many stupid stories. Therefore, we have trouble between Vaishnavites and Shaivites — your temple, my temple. Now Ram Janma Bhoomi and Babri Masjid — inter-religion, intra-religion — and we call ourselves a Sahaj Marg society.

Even today, how many of you will permit a marriage of your daughter with a boy of another community? How many of you will permit a marriage between your daughter and a boy of your own community, but of a different branch of your community? Which Iyer belonging to Vadama will accept a Bhrahacharanam bride? Which Iyengar of the Vadakalai cult will take a Tenkalai bride? Which Nadar, you know, who is supposed to be the lowest caste — Brahmins call them Shaanan you see, toddy-tappers — there you have eight or ten *vargas* [class/order]. My driver was one of those, Pazhani; he died unfortunately. He belonged to what they call the Pulavar community among the Nadars — the Shaanans, you see. And his marriage caused a great furore; because his love marriage was with a Shaanan girl two levels lower than himself. Rather carelessly, rather tactlessly, I said, *"Shaanan, onakku ennada vanthathu?"* [You are a Shaanan. What is your problem?] *"Athu innaa samy appadi sollipite? Ithe ni Rajapalayathula solli iruthaenna un thalaiya seevi iruppen.* [Sir, what are you saying? If you had said the same thing in Rajapalayam [their native place], I'd have chopped off your head.]"

You see, so much is this caste business; yet here we talk, blah, blah, blah, blah; quoting Lalaji, Babuji, telling lies, lies, lies. First of all we should stop telling lies to ourselves — that is co-operation. Harikrishnan was talking of co-operation. When you praise your brother, and he does not deserve that praise, you are a liar and you are not co-operating with your Self. To my mind, co-operation means co-operation with your inner Self. The Master outside may be a senile old fellow with a beard; he may be a stupid young fellow without a beard; he may be a combination of the two. It doesn't matter; he is an external authority; it is difficult to obey him sometimes. But the same fellow inside you, when He says, you have to co-operate.

Secondly, in Sahaj Marg we are always talking of love, love, love; but if your daughter wants to marry another boy with whom she is in love, "What love? Nonsense!" you say, "My sister's son, chief engineer in the dam project, earning six thousand seven

hundred and fifty rupees, he is going to be your husband." "Why?" "Because he's my sister's son." It is not true. If he was getting thirty rupees, you would not recommend him. He's getting six thousand seven hundred and fifty rupees, he has got a bungalow, he has got two watchmen, two cars, and also some black money. [laughter] So, "Sister's son!" "What happened to love?" that girl asks, you see. "But daddy, you are always talking of love." "Stupid! That is a different love." [laughter] "Oh! how many loves are there? This love, this love, that love, which love are you practicing with your Master?" The child asks. If it is young enough, the father beats. "Idiot! Fool! Stupid! Don't be arrogant; don't be proud. I am your father." "Yes, but daddy, that is why I am asking you, which love are you talking about now!" No answer.

So you see, we are too hypocritical, always lying to ourselves, lying to each other. Hoping that by praising we will get something done. Preceptor doesn't give sittings. "No, no, sir, if you say that, he may leave the Mission." "So what should I do?" "Just in public, say a few words, sir. Say we are grateful to him; he is doing his work." "No, no, but what is the work you are doing?" "No, no, you remember Babuji used to say, when I asked him what work such and such a saint did? Babuji said he is working in his own sphere."

Now co-operation means, to co-operate with the Master even if he beats you. See, everybody can co-operate when we are praised, "No, no, no, you are the best man in the world." "Yes, Babuji Maharaj." "Oh, you do excellent work." "Yes, Babuji Maharaj." "You know, you are not rich; but you are giving so much money to the Mission." "Yes, Babuji Maharaj. What a wonderful man Babuji is!" "No, no, you know, we are going to build an Ashram." "Yes, Babuji Maharaj." "You know, I don't like to ask people." "No Babuji, I am giving without asking," because he was praised, you see.

Tamizhula oru pazhamozhi solluvanga; Aadara maattai aadi kara, paadaramattai paadi karannu. [There is a proverb in Tamil; you have to cajole the cow by dancing/singing if you want to milk it.]

So all these *pazhamozhis* [proverbs] come in useful when we have to be lying and hypocritical. There are so many proverbs which we can use to condone our wrong behaviour. Yesterday I was telling somebody, there used to be a saying in my school, "When skin touches skin there is no sin." It was used for everything. Boy-girl relationships, one boy beating another; everything is skin touching skin, no? So who made these proverbs? If you go to one religion, it says killing a man who doesn't believe in that religion is great. God will liberate you. If you go to another religion, they say, "Even if he doesn't, even if he desecrates your idol, forgive him," that is religion.

So with which religion are we going to co-operate? Or are you going to use the various truths of various religions, to use for our excuse, depending on the circumstances, of our lying. I have had occasion to speak about the need to be truthful — at least in our satsangh — several times. Because when we praise each other, you know, it is like going to a doctor, and if you say he's a good doctor, "When I go to him, he looks at me and says, 'Oh there's nothing wrong with you.'" "No, no, but Doctor, I feel headache." "Who doesn't have headache these days? You are a great man; you are managing so many industries; some headache is inevitable." "No, no, but doctor, something here..." [pointing to the heart] "You love your wife too much; I have told you from the beginning. This is only a sign of your love, you see, heart is going pit, pit, pit."

So this fellow comes out, "What a wonderful doctor!" Goes to the secretary. "How much should I pay?" "Three hundred and fifty rupees — consultation." Gives three hundred and fifty rupees. Rotary club meeting next evening, "My doctor is the best doctor. When my head aches, he says, 'You are an important man! You are running so many industries, headache is inevitable.'" Everybody says, "Wonderful, you see, we all have headaches." [laughter] "Pit, pit, pit, my heart goes; he says, 'It's because of your wonderful love for the wife.'" Now there are so many people and so many loves there. Each one: pit, pit, pit. He must be right. And what do you produce? You produce a society of monkeys, you know.

Have you read Kipling, where the *bandarlog*, as they are called, the monkeys, they say, "We all say so, so it must be true."

So all doctors say the same thing, therefore they are right. All saints say the same thing, therefore they are right. We all say the same thing. We all say Trichy centre is wonderful, it is done beautifully, therefore we are right. But what is the fate of this centre? Where is it going? Where is *it*? This is my question, you see. Where is Trichy centre? I don't want an address. Address — we have the address printed in our book — Thillai Nagar; I have even forgotten it, you see. I used to remember the addresses by heart. Now I have to remember by brain, because my heart is not here. What can I do? Less and less abhyasis, less and less satsanghs. I don't see Trichy people at all. From the days of 1964, when I joined this Mission, it has been a sort of a *sampradaya* [tradition] with this centre that they never went anywhere. Even in Madurai, when you have a celebration, you would find K. Subramaniam, poor fellow with a small diary, noting down something, from which he would read when he came back. Therefore, today they are praising K. Subramaniam. Who else went? Who else went anywhere?

So you see, we have always been waiting for Master to come here, Master to praise us, Master to come to my house, Master to open a hall, Master to do this, Master to do that; that poor Master must have been eventually fed up, you see. Now I don't claim any supernatural way of knowing that he was fed up, as Harikrishnan said; but putting myself in his place, I should surely have been fed up with this centre long ago. That I was not fed up, is not an act of mercy or any special love for Trichy, or its abhyasis, but because I owe a duty to my Master, that something is wrong here, I have to come and correct it. To that extent Harikrishnan's speech was correct when he said, "Where he goes."

My Master himself used to say, sitting rather late at night, he said, "I am an owl, because I am a night bird," and he said, "You know, the owl is considered a bad bird." In South India it is true. If an owl comes and sits on top of your house and [screeches like an owl] twice, they will chase it away. It is called a *sha kuruvi* — a

death bird. But he said, "You know, I bring death; not to your life, but to your samskaras. I come to destroy samskaras. Therefore, in that sense, I am Yama; but not for you." Then he used to laugh and say, "In the West they are wiser, because there the owl is a symbol of wisdom. So where it comes and sits, there should be wise people, you see." But such few wise people as we are, if the owl comes, we chase it away because we are afraid.

When Master comes, we are afraid. We are afraid that he may look into our hearts and find our cheating lies there, our lack of love there, our hypocrisy there. So even when he comes, we pretend to have work somewhere. We go away, come and sit last in the satsangh as if he cannot see, because you are thirty feet away; as if he can see only if you are in the front line. It's all right in the classroom that the last boy is generally not seen by the master, but it is not true in the spiritual. In the spiritual, it is the first boy who is generally not seen, because he doesn't need to be seen; they have the courage to come and sit in front. They have nothing to hide. They come and sit in the front. The Master always looks at the back, "Who is there in the last bench? Why is he coming late? Why is he going before I say, 'That's all?'" Why does he telephone and say, "Sir, I am sorry. I could not come for satsangh." Because he thinks, because he is on the telephone line this fellow cannot see him. See how many hypocrisies. One lie balanced by another lie, supported by a third lie, strengthened by a fourth lie, ultimately we are building a prison of our own lies, and we are excluding ourselves from the *sannidhaanam* [presence] that we say the Master is.

So please don't tell lies, for your sake. Because the more lies you tell... each lie is like a bamboo post, you are digging in front of yourself; and one day you will find that there is no way of escape — you cannot walk out of your citadel of lies. It becomes a stronger fortress than anything anybody else built to imprison you.

Now what is the truth about Trichy centre? That it is there; it is still there. Now this I should say is an aspect of Master's grace, Master's mercy, Master's love. I was there when Dr. Kalamegam came. Our brother Arumugam Pillai was referring to Kalamegam.

I was there present when Babuji came; Dr. Varadachari came. Kalamegam happened to be a friend. I was also there when Mr. Ramakrishnan came. They came. Where are they? You see, it is a visitor who comes and goes. A guest comes and goes. He may not be seen again in this lifetime. A son comes and stays.

Who are the children of the Master? They who come and stay because it is their home, they have nowhere else to go. Wherever we may go, we come back home. But a visitor only goes somewhere to go back. So there have been many visitors, you see. That they were great people, does not change their status. They were great visitors. Home ministers have come to Babuji. Defence ministers have come to Babuji. In Andhra Pradesh, at one time, every minister in that government came to see Babuji. Where are they today? Nobody knows. It is the simple people who remain, you see. I think because they are homeless in the true sense. They have really no home. What they call home is not a home; it's prison for them. It is a prison of misery; it is a prison of vice; it is a prison of corruption; it is a prison of sickness. And when they come, they say, "This is my home, please keep me here."

So let us not seek greatness for this Mission by the great people who are in it. There are some, I hope there will be many — because I don't mind whether they are great people or small people, remove the adjective and they are people. It is people we want. They may be great outside this gate; inside, they are people. We should respect people for what they are, not for what they do. My Master always used to tell me, you see. Once I wrote to him a letter. I had a lot of hatred for one of my colleagues. It was so much that I could not even see him; when he walked into my room, I felt totally torn out of a sense of hatred for him; sometimes I was even afraid what I would do to him, you see. For instance, if I had a gun I might have shot him. So I wrote to Babuji. Babuji said, "You can hate a man's work; but not the man." The man and his work are two different things. You can hate a man's words, but not the man himself. As Harikrishnan said today, his throat is not co-operating, therefore we cannot hate him, you see; tomorrow it may co-operate better.

So the Master likes to have people, and remove the things which are useless, unnecessary, bad; create the things which will help them in their evolution. In this *we* must help. This is co-operation. How to help? By cleaning. He says, "Remove everything." "No, no, this is good you see, I have a charitable instinct." "Remove it." Another man says, "I have no charitable instinct." "Remove it." But he says, "You just told him to remove his charitable instinct and you are telling me to remove my uncharitable instinct." He said, "Both are bad." Who are you to be charitable or uncharitable? It's not your money — first.

So you see, we cannot judge what Babuji says, or what Lalaji says, by listening to what he says to another abhyasi. Can you do what he tells you? "No, no, sir, you asked him to take lime juice, but you are asking me to take water. You are partial!" He needs lime juice; you don't. "You prescribe for him *badam* every morning and for me you say, 'Stop eating *badam*,' what is this? Again, here also this favouritism, partiality?" If you eat *badam*, it will kill you; if he doesn't eat *badam*, it will kill him. What do you want to do? So you see, co-operation means *doing exactly what is told to you to do* — to *you*, each person individually.

There are general instructions which are contained in our books. There are specific instructions which are given to each individual individually. So we have to co-operate in a general way; we have to co-operate in a specific way. The third level of co-operation, which by his grace some of you may evolve into, is to know what he wants and to do it. Not for him, but for yourself. "What does Master want me to do for myself?" That should be the third level. How long can we go on asking for instructions? Are we not grown up enough to know what he wants? Does it mean that anything he doesn't tell me not to do, I am permitted to do? He has never told me, for instance, "Don't go to a brothel." So I can go. "No, no, Babuji never told me not to go to a brothel, sir." Why should he tell you? It is a general matter of general knowledge. "No, no, he has never told me not to get drunk." Did you ask him?

Like the abhyasi who went to Lalaji and said — who did not go to Lalaji — but somebody went and told Lalaji, "This fellow is going, you know, to the dogs; he is drinking. He has not come here for so many months." "Call him." Then Lalaji told him, "Drink. It does not matter. But think I am drinking." After that he could not drink. How could Babuji drink? How could Lalaji drink?

So as we go up we have to understand that there are many things which the Master will not tell us. Nevertheless we have to do it; because it is in our *hith* [benefit], in our favour; it is for our growth; it is for our development. So co-operation means not to tell lies — about yourselves, about your centre, about your Mission, even about your Master.

Babuji used to object to people calling him God, or addressing him as God, "Oh, my divine God is standing before you, he has come to grace this planet, he is one of the avatars..." He used to say, "Stop this talk." I said, "Why? He is telling the truth." He said, "No. He is telling lies." I said "Why do you say so?" He said, "Because in *his* experience, he has not known me as he is describing me." So you cannot speak of your master apart from your personal experience of him. Stick to your personal experience of him. If all that you know of your master is that he is five feet two inches tall, and has a dirty dhoti and a beard, describe him like that. There is no disrespect. That is how I have known him. That was what Arjuna thought of his Krishna. There was no disrespect, there was no lying, he was like that. When you grow up and see the Lord, now you describe him as the Lord; that too is the truth. Now you have a right to do it, because in your experience you have seen him as God. Till then, it is lies.

Now, this has a very interesting application in our daily life. He is my friend; I like him. Third person comes and says, "Sir, he is a liar." I should not listen to this. In my experience, he has been good to me, he has never told me lies, I know him to be a good man. What else he is to somebody else, what does it matter to me? "No, no, sir, everybody says he is a liar." Everybody are fools.

You see, who is here about whom all of us will go to God and recommend liberation? Can we raise one hand? Can you point to one person here and say, "Yes, for this person I will recommend," please let me have a test. You dare not. Because in your heart you know, that even for yourself you cannot sincerely ask for liberation. That is why we are begging, we are pleading, we are asking for mercy. None of us has the cheek, the guts, the right, to go to God and say, "Where is my liberation? You said I am your son. Come on, give it to me." See, this shows up our weakness, this shows up our lack of moral standing. The real moral standing, you see, that I can go and face my Father and say, "Make way for me; this is my palace; don't stand obstructing me here" — which son has got the right? Only a true son. Who is a true son? Who knows his father, in his fullness, and has the fearlessness, has the moral right, the moral authority to say, "Father, this is my place next to you on your seat; make way." The father cannot say no. He says, "Yes, come sit next to me."

So, when we have no right to ask for ourselves, what is this hypocrisy of praying for others? Harikrishnan said we must be selfish, truly selfish. In what way? The real selfishness is to make yourself capable, first for yourself, so that you may have the capacity to help others. If you are not a doctor, you cannot help a sick man — so study first. If you have no money, you cannot give a beggar even five paise — so rightfully, lawfully, earn something first. If you want to tell somebody's future, learn astrology first. If you want to be a good wife, learn to cook, soak clothes, wash clothes. This is not selfishness. This is acquiring the capacity to fulfil our role in existence, which in a wider sense includes helping others, helping finally everyone, finally — all.

So people who talk, you know, especially in the West we find this foolishness, "No, no, but don't you think the desire for liberation is also selfish, Chari?" They are crazy, you see. For them everything that is of the self, for the self, is selfishness, because they have a narrow outlook. They are very intellectual, but they have a narrow outlook. Let us not ape the West in reducing

our eyesight to a narrow slit and looking at the world through that. Let us understand that with the help of the Master, if I am able to develop in the right way, not only will I be able to help but he will expect me to help.

First the father gives, then he tells the son, "Now you go and give." When the son is grown up, he says, "Now you look after my house and my business." When the son is absolutely capable, father relaxes. He says, "Sir, I am retired, now he is there, he will take care." Then comes the next generation, you see. Now the father has the son who is looking after everything, he is there for advice, emotionally, normally, in some moments of stress, in some moments of doubt. "Father, what shall I do?" "Yes, my son, you know it. What are you afraid of? You are my son. Go and do it." That is enough. No more advice is necessary. Now that boy has his son on his knee already, and that boy has to be trained.

So, you see, when we start telling lies to ourselves, we are stopping our growth, our development; then where is the child and where is the child's child and where is the child's child's child? They are all already dead, you see. They are doomed to that hypocrisy and corruption and lies that we are indulging in ourselves. So generation after generation we shall propagate that which we are.

In nature, things have a faculty which the human being does not have. Only the human being is excluded from this. A mango tree gives only mangoes. A goat breeds only goats. Lion has only lion cubs. But human beings, anything from a God to a devil we are capable of producing, and there lies the problem of humanity. There is the real need for right living, right conduct, right thought. That I am a lion, let me not by corrupting myself, produce a sheep in the next generation. Let lion produce lion, produce lions. You can say, "Oh, but what about that lion? It has no morality. It has no ethics." Yes, but that is an animal lion. You are a human lion, Narasimha. I think the avatara of Lord Narasimha is meant to show this concept, not of a man who is animalised, but of the highest animal, the Lord of the jungle, being

humanized in such a fashion, that being a man you can have all leonine qualities: bravery, generosity, walking fearlessly through the dankest and darkest forest. And even if you kill, the ability to liberate that which you kill, because it has to be killed to liberate it.

I remember Dr. Varadachari once went to Azhagar Koil [a Hindu temple], and there is a small stoneway, about fifty to sixty feet, as you go from the bus stand. It is only a gate that is remaining there. It seems he sat and meditated there and he felt a flash of lightning hit him and it was revealed to him that that was the place where Narasimha avatar took place and his father was killed, Prahalada's father. And all these opposites were made to meet, not inside the house, not outside the house, not in daylight, not in darkness, not by solid, not by liquid, not by man, not by animal, not by God — all these things meet in that avatara; and he sat on that lintel, neither outside not inside; it was a time when it was neither day nor night, he was neither man nor animal, he was both. And Varadachari told me, he ate him up so thoroughly that not one hair of that man was left. He says he had to do it, because he would have been born otherwise again, you see.

So the Lord destroys to liberate — that is the fate of the sinner. The fate of the saint — the God preserves to liberate. So the choice eventually is whether I wish to be destroyed to be liberated, or whether I wish to be preserved to be liberated. Now to preserve and liberate is easy. To destroy and liberate, I must be so vicious, that I must merit the Lord coming here for me. God does not come for everybody. He comes for a Ravana, he comes for a Hiranya; he is not going to come here for a Somaskandan and a Natarajan, you see. So my feeling has always been, either be a good man, which is easy, or be so criminal, so vicious that God Himself has to come and finish you off. In between — nowhere between these two ends have we any purpose in life.

If there is a way which needs extremes, it is spirituality. If you have the guts to oppose the Lord, oppose him so thoroughly that God must come as your opponent personally. "I am here, come."

It is better to be a devotee — it is very easy. All that you have to do is to conform to simple rules, simple requirements of truth, non-violence, et cetera, which any fool can do. I don't know why people are finding it so much easier today to be vicious, lying, untruthful, corrupt; because they are going to be born many more times, either to go to the ultimate in that side, or to go to the ultimate in this side. In this, I believe, the Shastras tell us a lie — perhaps to protect what they thought was the sacredness of Shastra itself — when the Lord tells his *dwarapalas* [gate-keepers] you can come with me, and be with me for ten *janmas* [births] as a *bhakta* [devotee] or three *janmas* as a *virodhi* [enemy]. It should have been the other way.

So you see, our lies start from our religion. I am very sorry to say that the Indian corruption is due to the Hindu religion. Too many gods, too many praises, too many mantras. Shivan Abhishekapriya [Lord Shiva, one who likes consecration]. Vishnu Alankaarapriya [Lord Vishnu, one who likes ornaments]. This fellow, some other *priya* [one who likes something else], *naamapriya, stotrapriya, stutipriya* [one who likes names in praise of himself]. What is all this nonsense? And we take cups full of water and throw it on the head of a stone idol, which has little more *unarchi* [feeling] than a dead man in a *smasaana bhoomi* [cemetery]. And we come out praise-worthy, praising ourselves, with a lot of rubbish, burnt ashes in our hand, and society praises us for being great bhaktas. "Everyday he is in the temple, sir!" If it's a young man, he is looking at the girls; if he is an old man, he wishes he could look at the girls — that is all the difference that I have seen. I mean, anybody, one of you, can touch your hearts and see why you are going to the temple. Either it is to have your full sight, and, in front of you, something worth seeing. Who believes in Ranganatha? When he put out his eyes, you know, that *bhakta*, and said, "After seeing you, I will not see anything." You'll say, "He's a damn fool." One of my friends used to say, "What, sir! I can't understand this blighter, putting out his eyes when there are so many nice things to see in this world." It's not human, you see.

So, from the human we have to rise. And if Babuji saw Lalaji everywhere, I think it was a requirement he imposed upon himself first. It could not have been the truth all from the beginning, you see. He made himself see it. And how? By looking at the heart. Because in the heart is the same thing that you can see. The heart is a heart. Even a heart surgeon cannot tell you, by opening your heart, whether this is Rama's heart or Krishna's heart. He can tell you whether it is a sick heart or a healthy heart — no more. So when the spiritual man looks with a spiritual vision into the seat of the Almighty in your heart, it is no wonder that he sees the same thing everywhere — that is what we have to see. Then we have the satisfaction that there is something left in this world to live for. This man, however vicious he may be, still has that spark of divinity in him, let me try to fan that, make it into a blaze; let me co-operate with my Master in making this little *deepam* [lamp] into a big *jyoti* [light] you see. If you have not seen that, you have never seen anything. All the rest you see is a variety of faces, hear a variety of names. This is what we are doing in our temples too — variety of idols, variety of *moortis*, variety of *namas* [names], variety of *naamaavalis* [a string of names], variety of *archanas* [worships]. Our religion has only taught us to seek, or to *see* the many, and be satisfied.

The Hindu pantheon of gods is so vast that I don't think any one of us can name it. Their names — innumerable — he who has all names. And then this further corruption of naming our sons as Nataraja, and Ramakrishna, and Shiva, so that at the moment of death if I say his name, He will come. As if God is so foolish not to know when I say, "Shiva," whether I am calling my son or Him. We put upon God this blasphemy of stupidity, because we want mercy, you see. We don't want right; we want a merciful God who will forgive us and who will say, "Come my son, you are dirty, doesn't matter, my child is also dirty." Even a mother will not do it.

You see, spirituality talks of the guru as being a mother, but which mother will take a dirty child from a neighbour's house on to her lap? Her own child, yes. Not a neighbour's child.

"*Chi, chi, chokkaya matha sollu unga ammavai poi.*" [Yuck! Ask your mother to change your dress.] I mean I've seen this hundreds of times. It's the truth. Our child can be as dirty. So for the god, too, I suppose, his child can be as dirty, but not every child on the streets. So even if you believe that a dirty child can go to the father, make sure you are that dirty *child*, not a *dirty* child, but the dirty *child* of the father. Then you have a right. You can walk into your father's mansion with dirty feet, muddy the floors, muddy the carpets. He will only smile and say, "Yes, come." Ultimately, I will only say, if you want to tell lies, tell it only to your Master and nobody else.

Thank you.

7

The Single Aim of Life

Though I am not one of the speakers, and I am not prepared at all to speak, but I will put some thoughts before you.

Recently in Madras, there was some question about constant remembrance, and somebody said he is always thinking of the Master — so is it not constant remembrance? Of course our literature speaks of thinking of the Master continuously, or thinking of God continuously, as constant remembrance. But I have known Babuji Maharaj saying so many times, that in so many people constant remembrance has not been established. So thinking over this for many years, one day I suddenly realized that we often think of something which we cannot remember. Even if it's a telephone number, or a name which evades us, we think; and sometimes we are thinking and thinking, and we are not able to remember. So whether thinking is remembrance, is something we have to now seriously ponder over because, otherwise, if everybody is thinking of the Master or God, and he is not able to have constant remembrance as a spiritual practice established in himself, or herself, there seems to be the possibility that only thinking does not provide remembrance, and perhaps the problem is that we don't allow the whole thing to go down into the base, which is, in essence, constant remembrance.

If we are consciously remembering, it's not enough. If we are consciously thinking of Him, it is not enough. The secret seems to be that we have to establish this remembrance at the deeper levels of our consciousness, of our being, so that the remembrance goes on as some sort of a divine [inaudible] over which our conscious

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thought activity, mental activity, intellectual activity flows. In a sense, constant remembrance must be like a riverbed on which the river of thought flows. So, I would like you all to think over this and see to what extent this idea of mine is correct. Whether there is, in fact, constant remembrance, and if not, why not.

The second thing was something to do with Lord Krishna and the flute. I have been asked to speak about it. I used to wonder why Lord Krishna chose the flute. Why not some other instrument? I used to think over this, because (there are two reasons) Krishna happens to be my favourite, I won't say god, but my favourite, you see, my lover, my beloved. I don't know, for some funny reasons, ever since I was born, I was attracted to him. That is why I started reading the Gita when I was fifteen or sixteen years old. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that I am named after him also, having been born in Triplicane, near Triplicane in Madras, where we have the temple of Lord Krishna in his avatar as Parthasarathi.

Also, I got addicted to the flute at a very early age. This had no relation to that. I didn't choose the flute because I loved Lord Krishna. This came independently, that came independently. But later on, after I came to the feet of my Master, there was no special need to give up Krishna or anything like that, because I wasn't worshipping him, you see. I never indulged in worship. I never indulged in prayers. It was a sort of a love. And when Babuji Maharaj told me Lord Krishna is the Yuga Purusha and in some way he is our guide too, as the Master of this Kaliyuga, he is the ultimate guide for this *yuga* [eon].

So it seems that the Sahaj Marg *paramparaa* [spiritual lineage] goes up to him, through Babuji, through Lalaji, to Lord Krishna, seems to be a sort of a connection that has to be established. So this made my search for His truth, and the truth of the flute, rather more contemplative — I won't say serious or deep — contemplative, you see. Then one day, when I was in my semiconscious non-sleep non-awaking state, in Manapakkam Ashram one Sunday morning, I had some thoughts about this business of Krishna and his flute. Some of them I would like to share with you.

That the flute is a natural instrument: it is not made. It is a piece of bamboo, you see. You don't have to carve it. You don't have to cut it. You don't have to shape it. You don't have to stick pieces together. It is a unity. Secondly, normally it has nine holes, you see, through which you blow and produce music. And the idea came to me that the flute is really a representation of the human being, and that the Lord, by blowing upon us like a flute, is able to produce divine music through each one of us. Then the other idea, that the flute must be hollow. If you put something in it and stop it up, then there is no music. So the Sahaj Marg idea of vacuumization, of emptying yourself before the Lord can enter into you and work through you. Then, that it is His, you see. It is not somebody's flute— it is His — permanently within you [inaudible], which gives us the faith, the hope, the possibility, that we are all His, whether we are flutes or not, we are His. But when we can empty ourselves, put ourselves at His disposal, allow Him to blow through us... the blowing representing *pranahuti*, because it is his *prana* which blows through us. So it is as if that *pranahuti* of the Lord converts each one of us, represented by this divine flute, into an instrument in His hands which can create the ultimate music, which in turn can attract all His lovers. So that was the symbolism of the flute, which came into my mind, and since I am thinking of these things, I thought I should put this also before you.

Then there are so many other things, you see. The Mission is growing very fast. Sometimes, I think it is too fast. It is like a chariot where the horses are going on their own; the driver is not able to control, and somebody has to take the reins back. I am not suggesting that is happening here. But for me it is a personal fear, because, as they say, the buck stops here. I am responsible. Now what are we to do with this expansion? It is all right, we are happy that there are more people. In fact, this time I see more new faces in Bangalore than I have ever seen before. For many years I was seeing the same faces. I am not suggesting it is monotonous. It is nice. But we want to see new faces, you see. Why? Because, if the flute is played in the right way, and the music is of the right variety, the lovers must come. I mean, the idea that Krishna had

only to play on his flute and all the *gopis* came leaving everything as it was: rice on the fire, milk boiling, husbands calling them, children crying for them. They didn't care you see — they ran. If that quality of music is not being played here, there will be no new faces. The devotees, the lovers, are lacking precisely because the music that must call them, that must guide them to the source of the music, is not present. So to me it is some sort of an assurance, let us say, a satisfying thing, that you see more faces, new faces everywhere. So it restores in me the faith that perhaps the music is being played in the right way, that the activity that should be going on is right; it is fulfilling the purpose for which the music is played, for which the instrument is used, for which the Lord is present.

But at the same time, it casts upon us enormous responsibilities, you see. Transmission is the least responsibility. I mean, sitting from where you are, you can transmit to a million people, a hundred million people, a million million people. It is no problem. It is not as if you have to give physical food to so many people, which is the real problem. Transmitting to devotees anywhere in this universe is no problem, thanks to our Gurujis, Lalaji Maharaj, Babuji Maharaj, and the system, the *pranahuti*; the promise of Lord Krishna that no abhyasi will go without food and clothing. All these are there before us. But as the executives — we are all executives — we have to share this responsibility.

How are we going to handle increasing numbers? Where are the facilities to come from? Who is going to run around? Who is going to cater to their spiritual needs? Today I was happy to hear from brother Sathyanarayana that in Rajaji Nagar there are sixty abhyasis or sixty-five abhyasis. It is as big as the centre was fifteen years ago. And we have all these satellite groups developing. Will everybody be able to come here? Will we have to provide satellite facilities, too? How? From where?

So you see, growth... I mean, every father and mother knows this, that as the child grows up it has to have bigger clothes, bigger shoes, new text books every year, higher fees. So growth is a

wonderful thing. It's very satisfying. It is fulfilling the wishes of my Master, that his message should spread as widely as possible, without bias of caste, creed, race, anything. That is the *guru dakshina* [offering by the disciple] to my Master, to his Master; in that I have to, sort of, play my part; and you have also to play your part. You cannot just sit back as abhyasis and say, "Somebody is doing something for us — how wonderful, thank you." It is not like that; because the future race, the future, shall we say, group of spiritual, devoted servants, has to come from you. Are you being prepared for that? Are you being prepared only to receive and to be happy about your own growth and to satisfy yourself, or are you also simultaneously preparing yourself to serve. All this growth will stop, if you cannot produce more people to serve. Because after all, you know, it's like a school; you put in more classes, you need more teachers. You expand a class into three sections, you need two more teachers. Principal, one is enough. But teachers, you have to have many.

So the Mission has to see to it, our preceptors have to see to it, that simultaneously with the grant of spiritual progress, thanks to His grace, there is in you awakened a sense of responsibility for the future. You must, everyone must, be aware that what I have received I must pass on. Here there is no retention. Then you may say, "Why? What for?" But you must understand that what you take in as food, you are passing on in some way. Something is retained. If you say, "I will eat two kilos and I must retain all the two kilos," you will probably be dead in a week.

So, spiritual grossness is as bad, if not worse, than that sort of grossness. We give, so that you may receive. You must receive so that you may give in your turn, you see. It is like the torch which is being handed on in a running race. Each round completed, handed on to the next circle of runners, like a relay race. So what is evolution? What are we doing here? What is spiritual evolution? What is transmission? Why are we to receive it, if we only have to give it?

Why the whole thing seems to hang around the fact that it is the play of love that is taking place. You get love only if you give

love. If you only want to receive love, you don't get. Therefore, the law says, "Give before you can get." Learn to give first, want to give, long to give; then exist to give. People come to me and say, "Sir, I want to be of service," but, in what way? It is not enough to start building a house and giving a plan of construction and saying, "I am also serving the Mission." Yes, you also serve who stand and wait. But you must stand and wait for a purpose, with a purpose, not just stand and wait. "I am waiting." What for? "So that you may give me some work." Are you qualified? Have you qualified yourself? Have you prepared yourself? Have you prepared yourself in the way of capacity and in the way of willingness? Two things. I may be capable, but I may not be willing to serve.

So we have to create this awareness in our abhyasis, in our groups, wherever we are, wherever we go, that this Mission is not there only to serve abhyasis. It is to serve abhyasis of the future and the medium of service must be through the current generation of abhyasis, it cannot be otherwise. A grandfather cannot have a grandson except through his son, or daughter; and if he says, "I am going to be celibate," there is no more grandchildren.

So you see, the *vamsha paramparaa* [lineage of the clan] depends on this establishment of line after line of progeny. In the physical human race, it is through progeny, the physical progeny — my son, and his son, and his son's son. So the *vamsha paramparaa* is kept going on, this *gotra* [lineage], that *gotra*. But in the spiritual *paramparaa*, there is not this possibility. It has to be in the spiritual way, that the spiritual son must have his spiritual son, must have his spiritual son, and so on. So you see, it is like a tree which has no seeds; it cannot propagate itself.

So the Mission has a dual function, fulfilling the spiritual needs of the present generation, elevating them to the highest possible levels of divine consciousness, so that a society, which in North India they call Rama Rajya, can be established. I took the liberty of saying somewhere that just because there is a Rama there won't be a Rama Rajya. It is too, you know, easy a concept to say Rama came and there was Rama Rajya. Even in Rama's time, there was

no Rama Rajya. I beg to question this. Otherwise, this nauseating episode of Sita should not have happened. She should not have been taken away. Rama should not have had to give her the *agni pariksha* [a trial by fire] twice — not once, but twice. Loose talk should not have been there about her character, questions about her morality. So the race was not as perfect as we deem it, even in Rama's days, you see. Why, even his own mother betrayed him; his father sent him to the jungle. So where was Rama Rajya in Rama's time? This is a myth. But the fact is that, if not in his time, today it can be established. How? By each one of us becoming some sort of a torch-bearer of that value of truth, chastity, mercy, compassion — *daya,* you see, in one word.

So it is no use pretending that we are here to become saints. What is the use of somebody becoming a saint? It is like a lamp which will not burn. "No, no, I have a golden lamp in the house." Why is it dark? "It will not burn." No, no, what is the use of a lamp which will not burn? "But, it is gold." You see, that sort of thing is no use. It is enough if it is a mud lamp filled with kerosene, with a humble cotton wick, but if it illuminates, it is good. A lamp has no quality other than the ability to give illumination. A golden lamp is no better than a copper lamp, is no better than a wooden lamp, is no better than a mud lamp. This is our funny idea of goodness and badness of things, comparative value of things. "Oh, I have golden lamp at my house when I do my sadhana." Why? What on earth for? So that you want to invite the thieves to your house, that you have to lock it up, [that] you have to have guards at your door. A mud lamp, it breaks, you can buy another one. You can buy a hundred. Every Diwali you are buying hundreds of them — costs nothing.

So you see, we must have affordable lamps; we must have affordable saints, saints whom we can afford. Today, we were talking with some abhyasis about saints in India. It arose out of an article in the *Illustrated Weekly* about godmen in India — I don't know why they are called godmen — and how some of them are worth billions of dollars. So, can you afford such a guru? One man destroyed himself by asking for a four and a half million dollar

watch; his downfall started from that, you see, from that day his downfall started. His secretary ran away with his billions. Then he got into trouble. He could not find a port in which he was allowed to land for more than thirty days — so on and so forth.

So we must have an affordable system. We must have an affordable practice, which we can do every day without demands being made on us, like in the old days of *tapasya* [ascetic practices] and this and that. But the principles, relevant, must be practiced, you see; like purity of mind and body, all those *astheya* [non-stealing], *aparigraha* [non-covetousness], *saucha* [purity], this, that and the other. Don't put it in Sanskrit, but put it in English, put it in Kannada. Remembering that a river flows not only behind your house, but behind so many other people's houses, and into the next village and into the next. You have only a right to take as much water as you need out of it.

Similarly, here too, we have a right to take whatever we need from this Mission. In spiritual terms, there is no limitation. The trouble is people don't understand the value of the spiritual dimension, but are clamouring for other benefits — marriage, promotion, establishment of industries. What is the use? They are going to disappear one day. Anything that you can create in the physical world, however vast, however immense, however marvellous, is going to go. I mean, when we are going to go, what is the value of building a house which will live beyond my lifetime — even if it's three thousand years — what for?

As Kabir said, "If you have to worship, please worship the mountains." But what have the mountains achieved? Except, you say, *Kailasha parvata* [Mt. Kailash] — Shiva has been there. Another mount, somebody else is sitting, this mount, somebody else is sitting. They are only *asanas* [seats] for the great. The highest mountain is but an *asana*. Why not I sit on the ordinary floor on a piece of cotton and call this my *asana*? I don't have to go to a mountain. It is not affordable by me. Shiva can afford, but not me. You see the trend of thought? Another rishi could have gone on a mountain top and dug a cave and meditated there.

Why a cave? Why a mountain? The only benefit that I can think of is you get good breeze all the time. Have a fan.

So, you see, in our spiritual journey, we should not allow anything but the spiritual dimension to attract us. The rest, as we say, "Insha-Allah." It is a clear teaching of Sahaj Marg that your basics, material existence, is governed by your samskaras. That you are an abhyasi of Sahaj Marg system in no way implies any change in your physical status A beggar may continue to be a beggar. An industrialist may continue to be an industrialist. An engineer may continue to be an engineer. "Then sir, what is the use? I thought by coming here, my problems would be relieved." Yes, spiritual problems. "What about material problems? It may prevent me from doing my meditation." Prayer to the Master can help, because the Master said, that if there are problems in your material life, which *harm* your spiritual growth, such problems can be removed. I said, "Why not everything? If you can remove this, why not everything." He said, "You ask for too much." I said, "In what way?" He said, "The law maker does not want his law broken."

The law is, that as you have sown so you are reaping now; and as you shall sow today, you will reap tomorrow, day after, next year. *You* have created your destiny. You have created the material circumstances under which you are born. You should have thought of this before. You didn't — now, *bhog* — this is the theory of *bhog*, you see. Enjoy it. Enjoy means — suffering also is enjoyment; enjoyment is also suffering. The two are two sides of a coin — which is enjoyment, which is suffering, we don't know. We take medicine; we have injection; it is painful, but we are better. Which would you prefer? To avoid the injection and continue to suffer; or to suffer the pain of the injection and continue to enjoy. So it seems to produce its opposite all the time, you see.

So if at all he interferes in his own law, it is only to relieve us of such problems as can possibly keep us here in our spiritual existence; if that is not the case, you will not be changed in your physical existence. It's not necessary. That is why you find great

saints — they have remained uneducated, they have remained illiterate, they have remained weak, they have remained sick. They did not care, because they were the great souls for whom the physical dimensions of existence never proved a bar to their spiritual advancement. So God said, "Yes, he can manage, let him manage. This fellow cannot manage, let me change it a little." Otherwise, we have abhyasis who say, "Sir, if Janaka could be Rajarishi and a Chakravarti, why not we too?" This desire is in every one of us, you know. Why not we also sit on a *simhaasana* [royal throne] and sleep on a *ratna kambala* [the best carpet], and also be a saint? It is not necessary. If that is the way, if that is how your destiny has been created by you for yourself, that you will be born a king and yet achieve the spiritual dimension of reality, so be it. But that can happen to only one or two, or probably a dozen in this world, you see. There are not so many kings left.

So we humble people, remaining humble, satisfied with our humble dimension of existence, must yet evolve into the spiritual ultimacy which has no limitations, as far as our circumstances of life here are concerned. Whatever we are here, we can be *that*. So why not grasp the opportunity. Why should we wait for change in our dimension? It is like a tree saying, "No, no, replant me somewhere else, then I shall produce better mangoes." It doesn't know; if you replant it somewhere, it may die. It most probably will die.

People want change, stupidly sometimes. I know even people who change their houses, then after a few months, they want to change their house back. They change jobs. They are not so happy. It is one of the human frailties, weaknesses, that we are never happy with what we are, with what we have. But without contentment, there is no life. So Babuji Maharaj said, "Seek that in which there is no stoppage, in which there is no bar to your advancement, in which nothing in this life can obstruct, so long as you don't let it obstruct, and then we shall see."

So, you see, my prayer to all of you is to forget all these material things, material problems; accept it as something you

have created for yourself. It is the truth, that at the end of your life, physical life, the soul takes a review of its past existence, because in its disembodied state, as Babuji Maharaj said, "The soul gives all wisdom." There, in its now total wisdom, it says, "What have I done? How have I done this? What shall I do to reach my goal?" and it sets a plan for its next life, if it is destined to be born again.

So each one of us here has made the plan for ourselves. Then to whom shall we complain? Now if that plan has been meticulously followed, as the soul intended it, before it was born again, this should be the last life for every one of us. But having been born according to plan... it is like one of these rich people who are building a house, who come and say, "No, no, remove this window, put it there. Take that roof and put it here. Put the floor there." What sort of house you will get?

So having been born, we become subjugated to desires, subjugated to tendencies. The original plan with which we took birth here is destroyed. We don't have the ability to create a new plan, because we don't have the original wisdom of that soul in its disembodied state. Therefore, we have been wafted here and there, you see.

Nobody is to blame. Not God, not Master, but only *you*. So now, to whom shall we pray? Pray to yourself. But there comes a Master with his mercy and says, "Forget it. You have made a mess of your existence. Let me handle it. But I handle only the spiritual life. Are you willing?" "No, no, Babuji. What about...?" He says, "Let us see. Prayer works wonders. If He permits, it shall be changed." But, don't take it as a guarantee — *if* He permits. Because he cannot do it himself, he refers to his Master. His Master probably said, "Let God permit," then he will do it.

So, you see, the plan which we make, we have aborted in a sense. Therefore we are struggling, we have no direction, we have no purpose. We have no sense of purpose. We have no will power. Sadhana helps re-create in us all these things. First of all, the idea of the goal is a re-creation of this purpose. Where am

I going? Sadhana itself strengthens our will. Now it tells us how to get there. The presence of the Master, who has guaranteed us his assistance at every stage of our future evolution, gives us the confidence to undertake that travel.

So you see a sense of purpose there. The will is re-established. The confidence that one who has risen superior to everything on the earth, in the universe, is with me. Three things. What more do we want? That is why we need the Master, we need the Mission and we need the method. Having established this association with such a body, with such a person, with such a system, we still continue to think of our purpose as this and this and this — again we are meandering, again we are wandering. So it is our responsibility to ourselves, our duty to ourselves, to see that all our faculties, all our strengths, the whole of our will is canalized into this one objective, the achievement of this single aim of life, that I shall end up as a spiritual person.

Where He wishes me to go, there I will go. With Him, I will go — with nobody else. Doing what He asks me to do, doing that, I will go with Him. Finished. If you are able to do these three things, I think spirituality will end before it even begins. If you don't do this, we are going to live here and last here for sixty years, seventy years, discussing, talking, praying. Even prayer we are unable to do with faith. Why do prayers fail?

I was talking at Trichy about life, good and evil, light and darkness, darkness and light, virtue and vice. I suggested that it is like two banks of a river. A river needs two banks to flow through. No river can flow without two banks. If only one bank is there, there will be no river. The water would have flown off. So one is the right bank, one is the left bank. This is the way of darkness, this is the way of light; this is the way of truth, this is the way of untruth — but we are between two. You cannot have a river with one.

So in life, in this embodied existence, we have to have these two things; and in this, the ancient truth is put in a very beautiful

way, that where one exists, the other must exist. You cannot have truth where there are no lies. You cannot have light where there is no darkness. You cannot have tall where there is no short. You cannot have rich where there is no poverty. It is always a comparative state. The absolute is neither a lie nor a truth. I do not like this idea of religion saying that that is the truth. Truth of what? Self!

So as long as we are here, we need these two things, to guide us between them to our destination. We are always heading away from the wrong side towards the right side; and if you are edging too much on this side, you should come back. This is the balance that we have to strive to achieve. You can see a river when it bends, going into the opposite bank, eroding it, coming back here, leaving a sand bank on this side.

So we need the truth and untruth, to guide us through them. One is not enough. One who says I never speak a lie — he is a liar. One who says I never saw the darkness but only the light — he is another liar. One who says I saw God and not the devil — he is only talking from a lower level where he saw perhaps Brahma and Vishnu and Maheshwara but not the ultimate *para tattva* [Ultimate principle]. We have nothing to do with Shiva and Brahma and Vishnu. What for? They are functionaries of nature. Therefore, what are we to do in their temples? Pray to them? On the contrary, we must submit petitions to them. "What are we doing? Ye, almighty Maheshwara, where are you? Are you in heaven, or are you in hell? And if you are in heaven, what are you doing there? If you are in hell; what are you doing here? What are you doing to redeem us? Vishnu, what are you doing? You are supposed to be protecting us, looking after us. What are you doing?" I mean, this is what we should be doing, you see. Like you petition the Government, petition the police, petitioning the Corporation — petition the gods, not pray to them, you see. Petition. When have you the right to petition? When you can approach them with a clean heart and say, "I am doing my part. You are failing in your part." Therefore, we are not able to petition, you see.

Because we are all guilty of so many things, we dare not approach God with a petition. So we go, you know, snivelling like a cur. Have you seen a dog which feels guilty? It goes on its belly. We go like that to our temples, *sashtanga namaskara* [prostrating before the deity], *adi pradakshina* [circumambulation around the temple]. Tirupati — you roll around in a wet sari; nauseating, you know, people are vomiting all the time. This is called worship. Snivelling dogs and bitches; and God says, "*Chi*, I would rather have dogs. At least they wag their tails and jump on me and try to lick my cheeks. They show their love. What are you showing? You are showing your fear, your guilt, your lack of faith in me, begging from me, the Almighty Lord, who can give you Myself." And you are cheating in the temple. You go to the *pujari* [priest], pay him five rupees and take so much of that *sri paada renu* [the dust from the deity's feet] to take home as a *prasad*. So what will we get from such lords and ladies in heaven? We cannot get, because we dare not ask. Our prayer is confounded with fear. "Will my prayer be answered?" When we ask this question, there is no prayer. "How shall we pray?" When we ask, there is no prayer.

So you see, we are not even capable of *praying* to Him. So we have to restore in ourselves this purity of mind by which we can approach the Lord our Creator without fear. If you are impure, you must at least have the innocence of the child, that can nevertheless go unclean to its parent and say, "Here I am; change my clothes," you know, like the child demands of its mother. So, which *devi* should we pray from, beg from, sacrifice cows and buffaloes to? If she is the divine mother, she cannot refuse. On the contrary, she must run after us. So you see, the whole thing is a perverted philosophy, a perverted religion, a perverted worship, filled with lies, filled with miserable lies, filled with deceits, filled with corruption; and unfortunately, more of it is springing up everywhere. More temples are coming up every day.

So, you see that spirituality has to give you such an important change in your way of thinking, in your approach to divinity, in your approach to yourself, because if you are afraid of God, you

are afraid of yourself. Nobody can be afraid of God who is not afraid of himself, or herself. That is why I suggested in Indore during Basant that unless we can love ourselves, we cannot love God, because the Self is God. What is the use of repeating the *purusha sukta* ad nauseam and saying, "I am in his heart. I am the heart of every created being," but what for? Where is He? Why is He not manifesting himself? Because we have closed the doors. We don't want Him to appear. We are afraid. Therefore I have said so many times, temple worship is a very great convenience, created by the genius of the Hindu mind, the corrupt genius of the Hindu mind, that the temple is like a toilet. We can visit it when we wish and lock the doors when we don't wish. Leave God in His place, come back to our place, do what we shall, what we will, and be free of Him, thinking that He does not see.

He sees from here [points to the heart], right from inside myself. He participates in everything. He doesn't have to see. He is a participant. He is the Lord. He is the governor of my existence. Unfortunately, He has to participate, but He participates in a serene way, because He says, "What is there in which I am not? I am in the criminal. I am in the sinner. I am in the prostitute. I am in the saint. I am in *malaa* [impurities]. I am in *mootra* [excrement]. I am also in gold. I am in platinum. I am in the Himalayas. I am in the deepest cesspool of existence. I am in heaven. I am in hell. I am master of the seven worlds. Also I am master of the seven lower worlds, *atala, vitala, rasaatala, paataala,* et cetera. There can be nothing in creation where I am not, and of which I am not a master. So you are indulging in lies? In that too, I am there. Can you tell a lie without My presence? Then you will be dead." How can a dead body tell lies, or speak the truth?

So, when He leaves, we are dead. Then for us, there are no *dvandvas* [dualities] of existence. No more lies, no more truths; no more saintliness, no more sinner; you know, no more prostitute, no more *pati vrata shiromani* [best among chaste women] — both are gone. In our life, both are there; in the state of death, both are gone. Where are we? We are still nowhere. Therefore, you see, in this state, while you are still alive, using these two extremes of

existence — light and darkness, truth and untruth, chastity and misery, health and sickness — using them as guides through which you must move. Avoiding extremes of both, using both at our pleasure, as necessary, as instruments of evolution, which is what the commandment says, "Accept miseries as His blessings."

Why does it restrict itself only to accept miseries? Because the good we are always willing to accept. We don't have to be taught. "Sir, will you accept wealth?" What is this? [laughter] What a foolish question. "Will you marry a beautiful girl?" *Emayya?* What are you asking? Who doesn't want a beautiful wife? So the law says, "Accept miseries," because that we are not willing to accept. This, we are already willing to accept. The law says, "Accept this too." Now we are safely contained between the two extremes of existence. We cannot move out of this course, inexorably the river takes us to the sea.

So this is my understanding of Sahaj Marg, you see. I don't know, how far it is correct. But it is not the correctness or the incorrectness which should bother us. It is the thought behind these things. Why we cannot avoid one and go to the other? Why if a *sannyasi* becomes an ascetic and leaves all the usual existence of family life and runs to the other extreme; he is making as much a mistake as a human being who gets drunk and goes to the brothels. I see no difference. This is in one extreme, that is in one extreme. Perhaps this fellow is having a better life, getting some enjoyment out of it — perhaps, you see.

So you see, we must — like we are going between the two banks, I repeat, again and again — strike this shore, move back here; strike this shore, move back here; and remembering that the stream in the centre of the river, the water in the centre of the river, is unmoving, unchanging. It keeps going. That is the stream. To this stream is that stream flowing, so that this stream may be strengthened, and eventually we shall all reach our destination. May it be so.

Thank you.

8

Teaching and Learning

I have been thinking of the Indian way of teaching and learning. Now, I have no intention of talking about the educational system, but about the average Indian's attitude to learning and to teaching, you see. Most of the Indians, I mean perhaps all of us, are experts in teaching. We would like to teach others. We never like to learn. You can find this in any bus stop, in any bus, in any train. A man wants to know how to go from here to, say, Thondanallapur; the moment you tell him, go to the KSRTC Bus stand, "Yes, yes, I know." He doesn't know what it is. He does not know what is KSRTC. He doesn't know where it is. "No, no, I know." From there, brother, you take... "Yes, I know."

See, we have this problem in India of learning. I had very bad experiences with some of my teachers. I don't want to tell you what it is, because it will appear in my serialized autobiography [laughter]. If I tell you now, you won't read it and enjoy it there. It is published in *Constant Remembrance*. Even teachers are unable to learn.

Anyway, it is obvious that one must learn first before one can teach. But from young to old we have this problem of arrogance of pride, that we know everything, even when we ask questions. "How much is the banana?". Two rupees. "Yes, yes, I know; but how much are you going to charge?" What is the meaning? I don't know, you see. Justifiably the shopkeepers get angry. Well, if I were a shopkeeper, I would throw a banana at that fellow's face and tell him to get out of here, or take this free.

22 March 1991, Bangalore

So today's advice from me to you is to, *for heaven's sake, start learning.* Now, perhaps instead of giving you a lecture on how to learn — so that you don't have to tell me tomorrow that, "You are trying to teach! All the time you are telling us not to teach, but you are yourself teaching" — I will tell you how I learned.

In school I didn't learn much. I learnt enough to pass the examinations, creditably with a first class; but for me there was no happiness. I have been always unhappy as a student. Perhaps I expected too much from myself, I don't know, because I was not really conscious. But I was never satisfied with what I did. Not that I wanted to go to the IAS, or become the collector of Rajasthan, or anything like that. I didn't really know what I wanted, but I knew that what I wanted was not being given to me, and that my performance was not a reflection on the educational system but perhaps more of a reflection of my own efforts, poor as they were.

I had the benefit of studying under European teachers right through school. They were a dedicated breed, you see. When they took a salary, they tried to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. They really taught. Whether it was on the playground, whether it was in the classroom, whether it was in the laboratory, or in the church (I had to attend church for many days), *they really taught.* Still, you see, that was not enough, because they were always conscious that they were teachers.

Now this gave me the understanding that, if you want to really teach, you should not feel that you are a teacher. Because the moment you think you are a teacher, you sit on a high horse and start preaching. Now teaching and preaching are not the same thing. In India we have too many preachers and too few teachers. Our politicians preach at us, our government preaches at us, and religion preaches at us — and even our stupid silly third grade teachers start preaching. They are moralizing all the time. If they would only stop moralizing and preaching, and get on with the job of teaching, they would make better teachers and we would make better students. I hope there are no teachers here. [laughter] But this is a fact, you see.

Our judges preach at us, our lawyers preach at us, our constitution makers preach at us; we are the most preached at nation in this cursed world. Every stupid fool who has the right, or imagined right, stands up and preaches. The Christians had only ten commandments. We have a commandment from every fool who looks at us in the face, whether at a bus stop, or in a bus, or in a train, or in a plane. Even air hostesses preach at us. If you see the difference between an air hostess on a Western line and an Indian air hostess — suppose you have by mistake not fastened your seat belt, there they will gently smile and fasten it for you: "Oh, it's okay, people sometimes forget." Here: "Please fasten your seat belt! Don't you see the sign?" Authority, you see. And you feel, you know, "What is this stupid woman, who is earning three hundred and fifty rupees a month, talking to me about?" Excuse my language, but that's how I have felt. I mean, they are just elevated nurses and things like that, and they preach — gas mask, another preach. They make you feel at the start of every journey that death is imminent, and did you have your life insurance or not.

In the Western airlines they make it certain that they pass on to you all the safety considerations necessary, without ever trying to teach you that you are in danger of life or, to put it in another way, danger of death. So you are able to absorb all that they give you with no consciousness of danger. Here, the moment they start, the first tendency is to grip the seat handles, "Sir, is there any danger that this can happen?" No. "Then why have we to listen?" That is the next — the attitude. The attitude to teaching determines what you are going to learn. The moment they make it sound unnecessarily dangerous, and you know that there is not any real danger but it is only a precaution, people tend to ignore that teaching.

I don't nowadays see anybody looking at the air hostess when she is demonstrating the package, you know what they call the life belt, or the life vest, or even this wonderful gas mask, repeated *ad nauseam*. Why they can't change the language? Why they should go on like a parrot repeating the same dreadful nonsense

again and again? At least make it appetizing to the ear. I don't know. Somebody should tell the chairman of the Indian Airlines Corporation: for heaven's sake, make sure they listen to you. Listen to what they say, because if what we think will never happen, happens one day, nobody on that plane is going to be prepared; simply because we have been nauseated by the way we have been told these things.

So there is a right way of teaching, there is a wrong way of teaching. Western airlines also talk about gas masks, oxygen masks, life vest under the seat, but they speak spontaneously. They don't have a sheet in their hand from which they read: "*Suniye! Suniye*! [Listen! Listen!]" What is this *suniye, suniye* nonsense? Or they put a video display; where the air chutes are, how you can escape if something happens. They tell you first that the marvels of modern technology ensure that the possibility of an accident is virtually nil. Here, they put on such a pompous air that we expect the air hostess to be the first victim of the accident.

So you see, we have to learn how to teach. I mean, I'm only giving you an example, like in our trains: Do not smoke. Fire hazard. Avoid Setting the Carriage on Fire. Everybody is smoking, including the ticket collector, train conductor, everybody, you see. And our railways go on printing these things and putting them up, at additional cost to the taxpayer. The first rule is, that if there is a rule, make sure it can be obeyed. Next, make sure it *is* obeyed. You know, in the military they have a dictum: don't give a rule which will not be obeyed; because every time a rule is not obeyed, you are promoting insubordination and disobedience.

So, lawmakers must understand that laws must be reasonable. Rule makers should understand, that rules must be follow-able, adoptable. We have... this country is full of rules, and every rule is broken all the time, everywhere. No Entry: that is the place where everybody enters, I mean, including in my ashram too, here. At least here they enter, I hope, with some hope. But No Entry seems to attract drivers, you know. They immediately imagine a No Entry is the shortest way to where you are going. [laughter] And if there

is no policeman, there is no rule, there is no traffic, there is no nothing. And who is at fault? The owners of cars, rich people, educated people, managers, they are blithely sitting in the back, they don't tell their driver: Don't do this again. I mean, I don't blame the drivers; I blame the owners, the bosses. What is the use of a multimillionaire Birla sitting at the back, and his driver blithely driving through the red light, and Birla pats himself on the back that his car can go through any sign.

I have seen in Paris, the French President's car going like any other car. There is no stopping of traffic. There are no two hundred and seventy-seven constables spread out over that area; there is no wireless. He goes like anybody else. Unless it is a state occasion when he is escorting the President of Russia, or the President of India, or something like that, when there is an automobile cavalcade, then there is a ceremonial stoppage of traffic — everybody understands, you see. Here any tyro — in Shahjahanpur I have seen, every Basant we used to get the district magistrate and the district superintendent of police. I mean, in Bangalore you wouldn't even notice them. They were followed by three jeeps, preceded by three jeeps and two motorcycle outriders, for a mere DSP and a mere DM. So whose money are they using? At what risk are they? I mean, they are having guns and rifles all over the place, you see. Yet, six jeeps, two police on this thing, motorbikes, and about twenty-seven policemen in these jeeps guarding the sacred and most invaluable lives of two officials, minions of the state. And we are looking at it. Nobody is protesting. Why? Because we are afraid. Why are we afraid? We don't know the law. Why don't we know the law? We have never studied. We come back to the process of learning, you see.

First of all we must learn what are our responsibilities, then only can we learn about what are our rights in that society. A society means a family, it's a small society, a community, a village, a nation, a whole world. Now in our country we are only learning about our rights but never about our responsibilities, because we don't have any. Every Indian thinks he has no responsibility. Government will do it, or God will do it, two big G's, you see:

G for God here. G for Government here. What are you doing? "What can I do, sir?" [laughter] I am stuck between God and my Government."

So education must first teach us what are our responsibilities. Our education doesn't do it at all. And I am sorry to say that even people in high positions don't care for their responsibilities, they don't care for their duties. In our country it is a shameful thing: it's a feature of our public life, private life, that the higher we go, we feel the more immune we are to everything, and the more liberties and rights we enjoy, but no responsibilities.

So you see, that we have the worst government in the world — we have had it for as long as I can remember, after the British left us. And that, hopefully, we'll just continue to have it forever — given the average Indian of today, existing as he is existing today, doesn't need any astrological prediction. We shall not have any different government until we wake up.

The problem is, again, the problem that we as citizens are not fulfilling our responsibilities. You say you are a democracy; you don't vote. Now, who has educated you on the value of the vote? Nobody. Only during election time, one week before, you get pamphlets, leaflets, "Your vote is valuable to us!" Aha! Now the moment the value is mentioned, you want to know how much you can get out of it. So you contact the nearest party minion, "What will you give me for my vote?" Someone says ten rupees, someone says twenty rupees — and that is enough for you. Your responsibility is fulfilled, your rights have been ensured, your government is established. All that you got is twenty rupees, for which you may probably end up by paying twenty thousand rupees during the term of the government.

So you see, education is an extraordinarily necessary process. And he who is not allowing himself to be educated, is the damnedest fool; he will remain the damnedest fool. Education is a must. I am not talking now of schools and colleges, because I can hear already some thoughts: "Oh, but I don't have the money to go to college." One doesn't have to go to school to be educated.

One goes to school to learn subjects. Education is available on the streets, in your home. Where do we have to learn? I mean, some of the most prosperous people today are uneducated people. People who never went through school, and whose boast is, "I never went to school. You see, I own all this; I own twenty thousand crores rupees worth of assets. I never went to school." Why? "Oh! I can pay, you know, and get brains." Yes, but a day will come when you'll find that the brains are cheating you, you see, robbing you left and right. Then, as one of my former employers in one of the big industrial houses told me, he said, "Yes, but I know how much they are robbing me of." That is crazy, you see, because you never know how much they are really robbing you of. Superficially, yes. So he says, "I prefer to be robbed by people I trust" — second credo of a particular section of businessmen I don't want to name. "I prefer to be robbed by people I trust." I don't know what this means really. Is it a syllogism? Is it an antithetical statement? Is it outright stupidity? It is like saying, I don't mind being cuckolded by my wife, or my husband. [laughs] Who else is going to cuckold you?

So education is for everybody. The multi-millionaire business upstart who thinks, because he owns a few cars and a few bungalows, he knows everything. And for the beggar on the streets who, because he is a beggar, thinks he knows everything. Now the problem is: how anything went wrong — when, where and why. My own feeling is it went wrong long long ago. I have to repeat this several times: that when your nation broadcasts from every public building, *satyam vada* [speak the truth] or *satyameva jayate* [the truth alone triumphs], that our society is founded on lies. I've had to say this again and again, from so many places where I've been speaking at, that I get sometimes nauseated by having to repeat the same thing. A society which repeats from every pillar — Ashoka pillar, top of your Villar Souda, et cetera — *satyameva jayate,* means that lying has been so deep in us from the times of Ashoka, from the times of the Vedas, that even in the Veda they have to say don't tell lies. And they don't say *satyam* [truth], you know, *naanrutam* next — not lying. It is like that famous statement

in the Bhagavad Gita: Come only to me, don't go to other gods. Or in the Bible, it is the same thing.

So this original stupidity, which the human race should have shed off long ago, has not been shed off, because it was associated with religious training, religious teachings. Religion had this stranglehold on a society which was trying to evolve. And because these truths were related to gods, so called, so understood, so taught, so cheated, we think they are divine truths which cannot be disturbed, which cannot be changed.

Now I remember, when I was two or three years old in this Mission, Babuji Maharaj gave me a copy of *Reality at Dawn* very shoddily printed, complete, full of mistakes. On every page there were about sixty to seventy mistakes, you can imagine. And he said, "Please correct this." I said, Babuji, can I correct your work? He said, "Yes. When I tell you to do it, you do it." So I went and sat down on a charpoy outside and I was correcting. Ishwar Sahai, master-sahib, came, looked at me, "What are you doing?" I had a pencil in my hand. He said, "You are correcting the divine work of the divine Master?" and he snatched away the book. This is today's experience, twenty years back, what to talk of Vedas and Upanishads and all the rubbish which has the sanction of religion. Who will dare to change? Can you change a word in the Vedas? They will shoot you. In today's atmosphere they will probably slaughter you on the streets; they will call you a Ravana. "Here we are coming to establish Rama *janma bhoomi* [birthplace of Rama] again, and you blighter, you are changing the Ramayana? *Katl kar do* — off with his head!" So you see, things are getting worse and worse, not better and better.

So my primary object of criticism is religion, because our truths, our holy truths, our ancient truths, so-called, are embedded in our religious lore, in our sacred books. Our humanity, as it exists in India, has been unwilling, unable, to change these so-called truths. Now it is one of the fundamental concepts of Sahaj Marg that truth changes as we evolve. The truth for a child is not the same as the truth for a grown up adult, or the same as the truth for

a philosopher. And at the level of the Lord Almighty, everything is the truth. It is like when you travel up to the pole — to the North Pole, or to the South Pole — looking down from the North Pole, every direction is south, there can be no east and west there, nor north — there is only one direction. You look from anywhere, you are going south. So from God's level, everything is the truth; but from our level, everything is a lie.

So you see, we have got to learn, or rather, as Babuji Maharaj so beautifully put it: we have got to unlearn everything that we have been taught; understanding — there is no criticism here — understanding that what we have been told, and what we have been taught, has been ignorant superstition, that things have to be changed if we have to change. And then perhaps there is the possibility of a new race of Indians coming up. Till then, it will remain as much a myth as the Ramayana is a myth, and the Mahabharata is a myth.

Now to do this properly, we must first understand that we are ignorant, and that we are superstitious. If you are going to meditate and go immediately to the Venkateshwara's temple just opposite on the other side of the hill, now I don't know whether you are rationalistic or superstitious, or both, or neither. You cannot possibly be rational, when you do something here and you do something else there, which is the grossest possible worship — it is worship no doubt, but is the grossest form. If you are going to do the subtlest here and the grossest there, it is like eating the best *badam halva* [almond sweet] here and a bit of cow dung from the streets.

Now it is your liberty to do it. If you say, "Yes, yes, but I wish to do it! Who the hell are you to tell me not to?" — go ahead. But don't gripe later on about lack of results; you won't get any. Because at the first sign of sickness your doctor will ask you, what have you been eating? "Sir, *badam halva*." And? "Cow dung." What a strange combination! What a strange combination. Why on earth such a combination? "No, no, sir, balanced existence," [laughter] two wings of the bird, you see, a bit of this and a bit of that.

So you see, these things don't hold water in an enlightened society where we are trying to go to further levels of enlightenment. It is not that the Indian has ever been ignorant. The Indian has never been a fool, he has never been stupid, even in Vedic times. You may ask, "Then why are you contradicting yourself? You just said it is all stupid nonsense." Yes! But it was the truth of those times. For them, that was the truth that they perceived and they wrote it down as the truth that they perceived.

It is like chemistry, you know, if you read a textbook just twenty years old, it has no bearing on today's chemistry. You read physics of twenty years ago, or when I was in school, it has no bearing on today's physics. You read the mathematics books of twenty years ago, no bearing on today's mathematics. You don't consider it superstition to throw away those books and replace them with the new books.

Once upon a time, you learned to count *onu, rendu, moonu, naal, anju*, [one, two, three, four, five], then you graduated into the pocket calculators. Now every fool has a computer in his home. You ask him what is 16 times 16, he punches — 256. Now, when we are able to use these modern innovations, the instruments which can further our knowledge, why don't we change the knowledge itself? What is the use of putting the Vedas into the computer, printing it out, and claiming that because it is now computer printed, it is more valuable than the old handwritten Vedas. This is what is being done.

So you see, the form changing alone is not enough, the content has to change. In medical problems, one of the real bad problems is the enlargement of the heart. We don't talk of enlargement of the heart in Sahaj Marg, we talk of expansion of the heart, they are two different things, you see. Now if you want to be dogmatic and you say, "Well, enlargement and expansion, they are about the same, Sir. What is the difference?" Go to the doctor, he will tell you.

We have to change the old truths, they were not lies in their time; nor are they lies even today, but today they have ceased to

be of any value to us. I remember in my young days we used to have a small coin called the Amman Kaasu; it was minted in the state of Pudukkottai, and every *anna* had sixty-four of those. You can imagine the value of the rupee. But today, if you take it to a shop, nobody will accept it, you see. It was a coin, it was current, that is why you call it 'currency'; if you take the old notes, nobody will accept it today. You may say, what about gold coin? Well, it is not accepted as a coin, it is accepted as gold. Similarly, your old Amman Kaasu will be accepted as copper but not as currency any more, you see.

So similarly, these old traditions have their, shall we say, gross value, like copper coins have the value of copper, silver coins have the value of silver, those texts have the value that you should give them: that they were truths, they were great truths, but not transcendent truths, not eternal truths. The Vedas make a mistake in claiming a sense of eternality for what they preach. There lies another weakness of the human mind in India that we claim eternality for everything we say, even in Sahaj Marg there is a section of people who claim that Sahaj Marg will be eternal. Will it? I doubt it. When should I doubt it? If it is going to remain static, saying the same thing over and over again, then it will also die out; it will become a religion; we will have temples, Lalaji's bust, Babuji's bust, *malas* [prayer beads], *japas* [repetition of a mantra], like the one you have next door, you see, that was also a great saint, once upon a time, so they say. I don't know.

So a teaching to be consistent with modern needs, present realities, must change. Even a snake changes its skin. We slough off our skin, not like a snake in one piece, but in bits and pieces. Trees shed their bark and grow new bark. Everything grows. So in a growing system there must be no encrustation, no petrification, no solidification, no claim that this is forever and ever, amen; it cannot be.

So simultaneously we have to understand that we have to throw away the past, modify it, accept it in the current context, change it where necessary, make it a living truth, and make sure that we don't imprison today's living truth into a safe and say,

"This shall be the truth forever after, also. So as we have to learn from past mistakes, modify the past, change the past to suit the present, we have to allow the future generations to change their past, which is our present, to suit their needs. This is the claim that Babuji Maharaj makes.

Don't think that I am trying to surreptitiously bring in change into the Sahaj Marg system. There are those who may read this and immediately say, "Ah-ha! What did I tell you?! This fellow is going to change everything." If necessary, yes — for your good. Because when Babuji says Lalaji took and changed everything and created this new system (which existed before the times of Dasharatha, seventeen generations or so before Dasharatha), yet he modified it to suit current contexts, current needs, and which he went on to modify. Because, if you read *Truth Eternal*, the one book of Lalaji we have, and you compare it with Babuji's brand of Sahaj Marg, you see what a vast change there is even between Lalaji and Babuji. Isn't it? And now, if there should be no change, how can we change?

It is like insisting that a train should remain on the platform. We should continue to do puja, great people should come and wave it off and flag it off, but the train must not move. Why? "Because it's a sacred train. If it goes, how shall we travel?" You know, this is what the old Africans of two thousand years ago used to ask, "If this train moves, where shall I go?" Yes, but the train is meant to go, and you to go with it. And if you stall the train and start worshipping it, and venerating it, and beautifying it, and gilding it, where will you go? Because the train doesn't go anywhere, you see.

So education, the contents of education, are vehicles for our growth, for our development, for our movement through our epoch. And where this has been nullified, for any reason whatsoever, including religious sanctions, that society will never prosper. You may industrialize this country to the maximum possible limit, yet the Indian will not rise. Because at base we shall remain stupid, foolish, superstitious Indians.

So you see, the need to rise, to throw away things which we don't want, like when you are flying up in one of those old balloons, where you threw off the weight that you were carrying if you had to rise. It may have been gold bricks, but you have to throw away the gold bricks; they have been sacred idols, you have to throw them away too, otherwise you are not going to rise. And remember Babuji's definition of God: that you throw away definition after definition after definition after definition, and when finally nothing is left, that is God. So God cannot be stone, throw away the stone; God cannot be copper, throw away the copper; go on throwing away, like this, you see.

Our people have just, you know, in their foolish, and I should say, debauched imaginations, put on dhotis and saris around our beautiful idols. They have sexed our idols to such an extent that I am reminded of an old story called *Penguin Island*, which speaks of a society of penguins on an island, blissfully ignorant of anything, in that total stage of innocence and the devil wanted to corrupt this society. He thought of everything possible, nothing could corrupt. Then one day he brought a beautiful box and started distributing bikinis, and from then on the penguins became sex conscious, they became a corrupt society, the devil had achieved his aim.

This is what is happening in our temples — dhotis, langotis, I don't know, brassieres perhaps for the females, perhaps it is too expensive for the priests. Now, we should put a stop to all this stupidity, to this nonsense. Isn't it? After all, we go to temples. Even those who go to temples don't think of these things. "Beautiful sari, if I had it, how wonderful it would be!" [laughter] This is what every female feels when she sees a *pattusari* [silk sari] worth five thousand rupees draping the *taayaar* [Mother, consort of Lord Vishnu] in Tirupati. "How I wish I had that sari," so you go to god for his divine blessing, or her divine blessings, as the ultimate mother, and you come away with a desire for a sari, you see, or for the golden necklace round her neck. You see how religion is corrupting us.

So please learn from everything. You know, we must stop speaking. And I would like to tell you, in conclusion, you see, that you are my greatest teachers; I have not learnt so much, I think, in my past I don't know how many lives as I have learnt in Sahaj Marg. If you say, who taught you? — of course, my Master taught me most of it, but I have not learnt any less from all of you, because every time I speak to you, every time I give you a sitting, every time you speak to me with your problems, I learn so much that you cannot even dream how much I learn.

So let us start listening, stop speaking. Let us avoid the impulse to say, "I know." Sir, are you doing the cleaning? "Yes, yes, I am doing the cleaning."

I have told you the story once of one of my friends; Babuji was lying down on his cot, I was sitting at his feet, one man came and stood there.

Babuji looked and said, "Are you meditating?"

He said, "Yes, very regularly."

"Cleaning?"

"Yes, yes, as you have taught."

"But," he said, "I don't see the result."

"No, no, Babuji, you must believe me when I say!"

He says, "Yes, yes. You know best," you see. [laughter]

That should be our attitude: "You know best."

Thank you.

9

Obedience to the Master

First of all, let me express my happiness at the way this centre is developing. It is developing very well. I don't judge by individuals, you know, but by the way the sitting goes, as we call it. After Babuji's *mahasamadhi* [the final samadhi, when a saint enters the brighter world] when I came here, sometimes it used to take half a dozen sittings before I could sort of penetrate that atmosphere and get into your hearts. That showed the resistance, born of so many reasons — we don't have to go into that. Now yesterday, I did a little cleaning and today you have seen the sitting was so deep. Did you feel it? So you must be able to appreciate it, I must be able to also appreciate it.

So the change is, the easiness and the immediacy with which the sitting gets established, the transmission gets established, and produces the profounder effects that we seek in transmission. It is not enough to just sit and scratch your head and scratch your nose and think of so many things, which is what happens unless there is complete co-operation from the abhyasis. I have often wondered why sometimes the sittings are so profoundly deep, tranquil, producing almost an instant *samadhi* condition and why in other centres where abhyasis are superficially very devoted, the sittings are not so deep, sometimes even troubled, disturbed. It is my opinion or, you can say, finding, that the abhyasi in individual sittings, and the whole group, they really decide on the nature of the sitting that is going to take place. Whether the preceptor or the Master can force something — that is a different issue. If you force it, it has no benefit. Even if you force feed a child, it does not retain it.

23 March 1991, Hyderabad

So there is this question of easy acceptance, willing acceptance, submissive acceptance, patient acceptance, and loving acceptance, you see. So I am happy that these four or five gradations are being swiftly crossed; so that as the sitting begins, instantly it is like diving into a pool. Otherwise, it is like sitting on the bank and just wiggling your toes in the water and pretending you had a bath.

So it is to me a very satisfying experience that this centre, which has always been a [chuckles] problem centre for my Master, thanks to one or two people, you see — and which centre he refused to visit for so many years, and never visited till the end — has changed in such a way that today in my meditation I wished that Babuji could be here with us to see this transformation; and he would have been the first and foremost happy man to have been here with us. Of course, he is always with us in a different dimension. But it would have been very wonderful to have him physically sitting here and showing us, in his eyes, his satisfaction that he felt.

I said that the previous experience from about five years prior to Babuji's *mahasamadhi* till about two years back, a total period of about ten years, this centre seemed to have gone wrong in several ways. And I said it was because of one or two persons. Now this shows the importance of the abhyasis' relationship with their preceptors. It is not enough to say that the abhyasi is that, that, "The preceptor guided me, sir, and this is what happened." I am always reminded of the war criminals' trails, after World War Two, when many generals of the previous Nazi regime were found culpable, punished by the courts, war courts, war criminal courts, and so many things were done. And uniformly their excuse was that they were obedient to their bosses.

Now, this emphasizes the need to be obedient at a particular level of consciousness. We must obey only that which can be obeyed. We should obey only that which must be obeyed, you see. There are two categories of instructions that I can probably

speak about in spiritual life: those which *may* be obeyed, those which *must* be obeyed. Not every order from a preceptor, or the Master *even*, must be obeyed. Because sometimes, I have had this personal experience with my Master Babuji Maharaj, that he would give me an instruction and then say, "Think over it, use your own intelligence and wisdom, see if it is a good thing to obey this order and then obey it." I said, "But you are the Master." He said, "Not like that. When I give you an instruction from my human level, I am as susceptible as you are to the idiosyncrasies of the human psyche, to the foibles of judgment, to the, you know, perhaps, the sways of temperamental emotion. So you must be very careful in what you judge. And if you think it is worth following, you should follow it."

So when the Master said like that, what to speak of preceptors, and friends, and husbands, and wives, and relatives, et cetera? As they say in Hindi, is it in your *hith* [favour]? *Aapke hith may hai, to kariye* [if it is in your favour, then do it]. Not for nothing is an old bunch of tales called the *Hitopadesha* — teachings, instructions, which are in *your* favour.

So you must as abhyasis exercise this discretion at every turn, at every moment when you listen to something, when you hear something, when you are told something, when you are instructed to do something — even if you are ordered to do something, you have the right to question that. Question not in the sense of a disobedient question — questioning it as an intelligent evaluation of the order; look at the purpose behind it, the moral purpose behind it, the spiritual purpose behind it. And only if you decide that it is to be followed, and that following it is in *your* favour, should you follow it. As far as I know, some of these centres went terribly wrong, not for any other fault of the poor abhyasis, but because they were overly obedient of preceptors who had been praised by Master himself. Master used to praise, so we thought they were also other masters, little masters, medium masters, three-quarter masters, et cetera, et cetera; and foolishly we obeyed everything they said.

Then there is the second problem — that in some centres the Master never visited, and they said, "Sir, this is the only person I have, what can I do? If I upset him, my spirituality may go a-begging. They may not give me sittings; they may not transmit to me." Here we have to believe in the infallibility of the system, you see; that it is not the preceptor who gives, it is not he who transmits; and that if you are sincere in your attitude towards your preceptors, and you question their instructions and their teaching, and are disobedient because certain orders should not be obeyed, you cannot possible be denied the Master's grace. On the contrary, I think he will value you much more, as somebody who had the guts to stand up for his rights; made a moral evaluation and said, "Sir, this is a wrong order you are giving."

I have had the privilege of questioning many of my Master's instructions and orders, which many people thought was insubordination. It was not insubordination at all. You see, I was always concerned with three things — the Master's good name, the Mission's good name, and my own spiritual welfare. It was possible that certain orders, if I had executed, would not have been in the interest of the Mission, or the Master himself. For instance, I remember in one foreign country, one girl had come in to a big inheritance. She was only about nineteen or twenty, she was a new abhyasi, eight months old in our Mission, and she wanted to give an amount equivalent to about ten lakhs, as a donation to the Mission. Babuji came to me and said, "Look, you are becoming very rich," you know, he never said, we are becoming rich, or I am becoming rich, he said, "*You* are becoming very rich." I said, "How?" He said, "This abhyasi wants to give ten lakhs." I said, "Don't take it." First he was a bit shocked; ten lakhs is a lot of money, you see. Then he said, "Why?" Then I told him that, "This girl is, after all, six or eight months in the Mission and if you accept such a huge sum and tomorrow she leaves the Mission for any reason, and then goes around saying, 'This Master came, this guru came, and he took away ten lakhs of my rupees. I was gullible. I was not knowing the facts of life,' It would bring disrepute and dishonour to you and to the Mission." He patted me on the shoulder and said, "*Shabaash*. [Well done.]"

So you see, there is no, shall we say, disrespect in disagreement. This is a fallacy of our Indian mentality, that respect means obedience and disrespect is implied when we disobey. Even with our parents. If you disagree with your parent, the first order from the father is, "Keep quiet. I am your father, fool. Don't you know?" Well, just because you are my father it doesn't mean you are wiser than I am, or you are better educated than I am, or that you know the facts of life better than me. We have fathers who are farmers and their sons are IAS officers, secretaries, governors. I know one beggar in Madras who was able to beg so efficiently that he was able to send his son to college and he is an IAS officer. Few people know that IAS officer's father is a beggar in Madras. The son, unfortunately, is ashamed to reveal that fact; which is a sad thing, because if you look at it in another way, the father was going to beg for his son, a very honourable thing. He didn't beg for himself, he put his sons through his college. Anyway, that is another aspect, you see.

But what I am trying to say is, we have to use our judgement, such as it is. Because I have found that when my Master and I worked together, he as the President of the Mission and I as the Secretary of the Mission, I am not talking now of the spiritual arena at all. In the administrative and executive functions of the Mission, he as President and I as the Secretary, often we had to disagree. But when he gave an order finally, and said, "This is an order," there is obedience. Because, now the onus, the responsibility for that order's consequences, for the execution of that order's consequences, are his. This applies only here in the Mission. If you are outside, you are still at liberty to disobey; because there, like the Nazis of Germany, they can always tell you, "You should not have obeyed."

Here, fortunately or unfortunately, we have a confluence of the spiritual and temporal extremes of authority merging in one, one person, you see. I remember when one particular book in the Mission had to be printed, I was totally against the printing of that book, and for various reasons, you know, they would not send me the manuscript. They would not allow me to see it. Then they came and gave it to Master, put it at his feet, ceremonially.

Babuji took it away to Shahjahanpur, without even letting me have a look at it. I was quite annoyed. I was, after all, the Secretary of the Mission.

Then after six months, he said, "Please look into this." I didn't. Then when I went to Shahjahanpur, he said, "Have you looked into it?" I said, "No." Then he said, "Why not?" I said, "You did not trust me from the very beginning. What do you know of books? Where have you the time to read it? If you read half a letter, you are getting giddy. You should have handed it over to me. I take it as an act of mistrust in me, it's better you deal with these books yourself." I was quite forthright. Then he came with some sweets in his hand, jalebi in one hand, milk, "No, no, you see, I love you very much. You are doing wonderful work." "This is Parthasarathi, General Secretary of the Mission," he went around introducing me to everybody. I kept in my chair, amused inside, angry outside, you see. Finally he said, "I want you to take this with you and read it." I said, "Do I have the liberty of rejecting this manuscript? If I don't have it; I shall not take it." He said, "Yes." Then I took it, and I had to reject it. Then he took the manuscript back and said, "Now I am going to print it." I said, "That's your privilege. You are the President of the Mission." Then he ordered me to send it back to a particular centre. I sent it back. Then he said, transfer money to that centre, to a particular individual. I said, "Sorry. The Mission's rules do not allow transfer of funds to a particular person, who is not even in the working committee or anything like that. To the centre, yes; to a person, no." He called me to Shahjahanpur. He was quite annoyed. He said, "You are disobedient." I said, "Yes." He said, "You can be punished." I said, "Go ahead." Then he said, "You are not afraid?" I said, "No." He said, "Why are you not afraid?" I said, "I am doing the duty, as I see it best, in the interests of the Mission, and I don't want you to make a fool of yourself." I mean, all this is God's truth, perhaps Shashi knows something about it, I don't know. "*Haan?* Yes?" [inaudible response]

So you see, disagreement does not mean disrespect; when it is in the interest of the Mission. I had disagreements with Master

many times and then I have told him, "Please forgive me, you are the Master, I am your disciple. If there is anything wrong, forgive me." He has told me again and again, when you are speaking in the interests of the Mission, you can say anything you like to me, there is no blame.

This is the sort of boldness that we want in our future workers, you see. We don't want toadies here, like you have in government servants and in big corporations; we don't want that. They are working for their money, they dare not disagree; they are afraid of being thrown out. In the Indian economy today, you cannot get another job. So we put all our shame, our self-respect, in our pocket, leave it at home in our safes, and go make miserable the whole society and ourselves.

Our intention in this organization is to build an organization which will stand for the future. I don't wish to say how far in the future, it's not my business. It is His business; He planned it, He has to execute it. At the moment we are the executors of His will. You know, like a will... as an executor, anybody who makes a will for his property can nominate an executor. So we are all sharing in this job of executors. And your benefit will be denied if this Mission is not run in the proper way. Abhyasis have to be very careful. You see, this is a parallel thing, like in the electorate; if we don't vote wisely, you get stupid governments; and then we suffer for the next five years. Then we vote in another stupid government; we suffer again. And all the time we are saying, "What can we do, sir? — the government and God."

As I said in Bangalore yesterday, we are caught between two G's, in this great land that is Bharatvarsha [India]. God on one side and governments on the other side. Now we have to break out of this 'G-G' business, you see. In Hindi, "Ji, Ji." always, you see [laughing], in other ways too. So we don't want this G, or this G, and more G for everything. And it is no secret, I have said this so many times, Master's most anguished time was in Paris in 1982, August, when he was not eating, when he was not sleeping, he

was in utter and total anguish. I was the only person with whom he was speaking. Then when I said, "Why are you like this?" He said, "What face will I show to Lalaji Maharaj? I have destroyed this Mission. It is standing today facing total dismemberment. There is no discipline." I said, "Babuji, you should not say these things; we are seeing the Mission." He said, "Yes, you are seeing the superficiality, I am seeing the inner reality. There is no discipline in this organization. I have fallen a prey to people's demands — *morabbat* — what you call compulsion, as opposed to *mohabbat* [love]. I have fallen a prey to their compulsions; I have said yes to everything. Today there are no abhyasis in this Mission, everybody is a president. With what face will I go and meet my maker?" That's what he said, you see. It was a most anguishing moment for him. It was no less of an anguishing moment for me; because no son likes to see his father ashamed, or suffering, or unable to face the public — hiding at home, hiding from himself, hiding from everybody in one corner.

Now, Master's instruction to me was, "Establish discipline in the Mission." Virtually his last instruction, because he went into a terrible decline; he was vomiting; he was sick. People tell so many lies about these things, you see, but the truth is this, that even before he left Paris, he was dead. Later on, physical death took over, that's a different story, you see. He died because he did not want to live any more. He did not want to live any more, because he thought his life's work has been ruined. And most important, he thought it had been ruined by himself, because he was not strong enough to resist compulsions, pressures, demands.

So you see, let us not make that same mistake again. Abhyasis need the Mission. The Mission exists for the abhyasis. The Master is the servant of humanity. He serves without servility. You have every right to make any demand that you wish, so long as it is for your spiritual purpose. You have every right to make any suggestion that you need to revamp this organization, so long as it is for your spiritual benefit. We don't want politicalisation, we don't want socialization, and we don't want amortization in the

future. But if it is for the present, and for your spiritual welfare, you have every right to express your opinions, your views, and your demands. "Sir, such a preceptor does not give me sittings." You have a right to say it.

So you see, how can all this come about unless you are enlightened in yourself and know perfectly, correctly, wisely, what is the goal of yourself — which is the goal of the Mission; what is the practice you have to follow — which is the practice offered by the Mission; to whom you must be devoted, and to whom you should love — which is the Master of the Mission. When these things are lost sight of, then it is like a rudderless ship; very powerful, very big, very nice, very beautiful, but no direction, no control, likely to be shattered on any object that it crashes against.

So you see, abhyasis have a very important role to play in the future of the Mission, by shaping themselves in the present, today, into enlightened abhyasis. Enlightened as to their own quest, which brings them here and enlightened about the objectives of the Mission, which is the only sure guide for what we have to achieve in the future. Obedience, I repeat, must be with perspicacity, with *viveka* [discernment]. And I must tell you here that Lalaji has said, you know, when talking of obedience, let us look at it this way: what is it that we can do with total moral conviction as to its rightness? Lalaji has given us three or four parameters, let us say, guidelines:

1. Does your religion permit it?

2. Does your religious literature permit it?

3. Does your guru permit it?

4. And, not least, does your conscience permit it?

Now, in particular religions you can destroy an enemy who is not in that religion — that religion permits. The head of that religion may say, "Take off his head." Two things are saying, "Yes." Isn't it? Religion. If you read the literature of that religion,

perhaps it may also permit — three. What about your conscience? If your conscience does not agree, you have a right to ignore that order, even though religion, religious literature, the head of the religion, all three insist that you should do it. But this freedom of conscience is no more there, you see. Today we say, "No, no, what can I do, in the Upanishad it says..." So we say, God damn that Upanishad, you see.

What is an Upanishad? As Babuji said, "Were there not gods and goddesses before the Vedas?" Was there not reality before the Vedas? Were there no great people before the Vedas? So why are we always harping on the Vedas? And if they were there before, will they not be after, too? See, if there was a darkness yesterday, before this day, it is possible that there will be a darkness again tomorrow. If it happens two or three times, then you know it is cyclical — darkness-light, darkness-light, darkness-light. So if there was reality, and greatness, and mobility, and purity and all these *dharmic* values before the Vedas, why should we assume that the Vedas were the acme and, you know, the culmination of that civilization, and ever since then there has only been a degradation? I believe that the degradation has been there precisely because we thought that the peak has been reached, and once the peak is reached, there can only be a decline. This is a psychologically enforced decline for which we, the great civilization, I mean, the great people of the great civilization, we are responsible.

When we say we are great, we can be great. When we say we are fools, we will be fools. We are what we think we are. I mean, after all, in Sahaj Marg, in the Raja Yoga, we are using the power of thought to create a future, or to destroy a future — both are possible. It is my contention that systematically the Indian psyche has eroded itself, its own values, its own future, by always harping on the past, having no future, and saying, "They were great, they were great; they were great; we are miserable, we are stupid, we are fallen, we are degraded," all this nonsense.

And all the rituals of our Hindu religion enforce this *pitru* worship, most of all. Fathers must be loved, never worshipped;

not even if the father is a god, because there is a god higher than this god. You know, I am always amused when you read some of these Puranic stories, particularly about the two sons of Shiva -- I don't remember who it is; Ganesha was one, and this fellow who went on the peacock, Karthikeya — he fought with his father, and the father went after him. It was in one of the famous Tamil movies. Wherever this fellow went, there Shiva had to follow; and a temple has been erected. But we don't take the story, you see, that there was a son whose father was God Almighty himself, and yet this boy could oppose him and say, "Stop. You may be Shiva, but in your house..." And what is the value of a Shiva, if there is a *para tattva* [the Ultimate principle] beyond?

So we have been worshipping Shiva and Vishnu and Brahma and two hundred thousand other gods and goddesses. Some created by cinemas, some created by profiteers; and we are in such a degraded state that today we go to a temple, immediately thereafter we go to astrologers, immediately thereafter we go to a *tantrik* and perhaps dole out the money and end up in a bar.

So you see, unless we are wise, with a wisdom which is not born of education, but from an awakening of the inner senses of the soul, an inner awakening created by the Master's first touch through his transmission, that is the true wisdom. I remember Dr. Varadachari used to distinguish between *buddhi* [intellect] and *dhi* [mind] when talking of the *gayathri mantra* [most sacred mantra of the Hindus] for instance — *"Dhiyo yo nah prachodayaat* [that which sharpens our intellect]." So we have to talk of the higher wisdom; the lower wisdom we are familiar with, which we call intelligence; it's not worth calling wisdom, which you get from books — facts, books of knowledge, et cetera, you see. This is what we are now parading as wisdom — an educated man, is a wise man. Not at all. An educated man need not be wise; a wise man rarely is educated. All the great wise people of the past were not educated. They educated themselves through the awakening of the inner spirit, the inner self, to a consciousness of their own, shall we say, stupendous and glorious destiny, and through that

they said, "This I am." The Veda says, "That thou art," I would like to say, "This I am."

So I would not only request you, but beg you, to be aware of your three things in life: duties, responsibilities, and by a right performance and approach to these two, your rights. Rights are bestowed upon you only by right responsibility and by right performance of duty. He who does not have any work, or does not work, has no rights. He who works without a sense of responsibility, has no rights. He alone has some rights, or can claim to have rights, who works with dedication, which means responsibility. Now, we have abhyasis who are conscious only of their rights, without any responsibility, or duty, either towards themselves, or towards the organization, or towards their future. "No, no, sir. I am abhyasi. I will be automatically liberated." This is the most stupid thing I have ever heard. If it was that easy, and if the Master could say, "Yes it is right," you would have all of India here in this hall. Who does not want liberation free without even working for it?

In spirituality, above all, you cannot keep what you don't get by effort, by sincere effort, by dedicated effort, most of all by continuous effort. Continuity of effort is necessary precisely because the first sitting failed to take you to the goal. My Master once told me, that if in the first sitting there can be total cooperation on the part of the abhyasi, and he has a Master of calibre sitting in front of him transmitting to him, that would be his first sitting, that would be his last sitting. Because it doesn't fulfil its purpose, we have to have another sitting. Because that doesn't fulfil the purpose but only takes you a step nearer the goal, you have to have a third sitting. It is like walking. I have to keep on walking until I reach my home. "No, no, sir. I have taken two steps." Well, the house will not come to you. That is why Babuji said, "All that you have to do is to turn your head from here to here, and it is there." But that is proving such an expensive, such a time consuming effort for us. Why? Because we lack faith. "Can it be possible, sir? Vishwamitra meditated twenty thousand years." Buddha meditated — what, ninety-nine years? I don't know how

long — all his life he was talking and preaching and watching, and ultimately under the bodhi tree he got his liberation. There was a *nirvana* [liberation] and there was a *mahaaparinirvana* [the great liberation of the Buddha]. "How are we to get, sir, in thirty minute sitting? And even that, you know, I only do for two to three minutes, really speaking." So you are condemning yourself, by lack of faith, by lack of effort, to whichever particular dungeon in hell that you are occupying now. Nobody is responsible. You are responsible.

Sahaj Marg, above all, teaches us this very essential truth that: I am what I am, because of what I did and thought in the past — samskaras. I shall be in the future whatever I wish to be, if I do and think in the right way now, in the present. So the onus for spiritual development is totally in the abhyasi, on the abhyasi. What does the Master do? He helps. How good can be his help? It can be total, if your dependence on him is total. If your dependence is partial, you cannot say I depend half on him and half on my wife, therefore I must have half the benefit. There is no such thing. It is not an equation: x/2 equals y/2. It's not like that. It is *all* or nothing. If it is nothing, or even anywhere in between nothing and all, well, he gives us gifts. That is out of his mercy, out of his compassion, out of his grace, and most of all, out of his love for us, because he is one of us. If it is *all*, he cannot stop giving. What does he give? He gives Himself. Now whether you want Him or His grace, is something you have to decide.

So please be aware of your goal. Read the literature, because I know many abhyasis are meditating without really knowing what they are doing it for. Some friend brings them, some relation brings them, "I too want to meditate, Sir." Yes. "Sir, what for?" You must ask this question, you see — not I — you must ask yourself this question, not me. Why? Because you must know what you are doing it for, and why you are doing it, and where you are doing it. What am I concerned with? If you are meditating, good. I am here to help. But do you know why you are meditating, and do you know in what direction the Master's help can take you, and

is that the direction which you wish to go? Otherwise, you are like a villager who takes any train in the junction, and says, "Sir, they are all trains, they are all nice, they are all beautiful, same good engines. What does it matter which train I take." Well, the destinations may differ. Each train goes in a different way. This is what some foolish people do. "Sir, all systems are the same. You are also meditating, I am also meditating. What is the difference between Rajneesh and Babuji Maharaj?" This you must think, you see. Why ask the Master, or the preceptor? Think for yourself. Here also they say 'hotel', here also they say 'hotel', why don't you eat at either one of them? One gives pig's food, another gives wise man's food. One gets you drunk into the depths of degradation, another elevates you. Where will you go? If you go to the expensive one, you fall ill with an expensive sickness.

So you see, it is in your benefit, for you yourself, to ask yourself these questions, get clear answers for yourself from your own intelligence, and then step into the arena of spirituality. Then you have a clear and conscious appraisal of what you want, how you want it, when you want it. Then you can catch the guru by the throat and shake him and say, "Your literature promises this and this, your master has promised this, his master has promised this. Where are my benefits?" Otherwise, we are like these no tax advertisements, you see — double benefit, no tax. I cannot imagine a society which gives you double benefit without any tax. It is only possible in spirituality.

Thank you.

10

Expansion of SMRI's Training Activities

I am happy to be here again, naturally, and I am happy to see the course progressing in each subsequent session that we are having. I am happy to see most of all the refinement in the course material that is taking place. Of course, I consider that each course material should be the foundation for the next. That way you will have, eventually, a number of books. The first ones will teach us a lot about something we need not know; the later ones a lot about some things which we must know.

Now there is one aspect of this training that I wish to discuss. That is, how often we should have it, where, when? I am going to request the Sahaj Marg Research Institute and its director, brother Narayana, to consider having this twice a year, because there is not only a demand from abhyasis, there is a need that we have to fulfil; and, perhaps, we should aim at having about a hundred and twenty abhyasis per session; that is, twice a year, means two hundred and forty abhyasis every year. And I think we should also try to encourage at least thirty percent participation from among newer abhyasis, because they are the people who need it more than the old established abhyasis.

I find that in these courses, you will find, what in Tamil we say, "Lot of old bandicoots." People who have been abhyasis for twenty-five years, thirty years, people who, I presume, should not need this course; I mean, I don't say they shouldn't be here, but obviously, education must be taken and provided for those who need it most, not for those who don't need it at all.

23 March 1991, Hyderabad

So if it is at all possible to sort of recruit course members, putting a little emphasis on the new abhyasis — I mean by new abhyasis, those who are about a year old in Sahaj Marg — that would be worthwhile considering; because there is also then the possibility of interchange — exchange of ideas — between the old abhyasis and the new, which in itself is an education. Often I find the new abhyasis talking among themselves, the old abhyasis talking among themselves — no rapport between the two — so that there is not only a tension, but some sort of a class distinction seems to be creeping in — these are old; these are new.

In fact, recently, I had a letter from Canada. One abhyasi has written to me very bluntly that he will no longer attend the group satsangh, because he finds that the whole group are the old abhyasis from Babuji's time and they just don't assimilate him, and he is treated as something of an outcast; so he would prefer to meditate on his own at home. It is a danger that we face. We all know that as preceptors there has been this idea of senior preceptors and preceptors, which did a lot of damage to the Mission. That was easily correctable. But it is not so easy to correct this trend in abhyasis. So I think the course directors should kindly consider this, and make room for newer abhyasis; and for this purpose there should be communication between the centres-in-charge of the Mission and the Sahaj Marg Research Institute, to ensure a proper spectrum of participants is provided.

Secondly, we have had quite a lot of experience in the last three years in carrying Sahaj Marg to, shall we say, 'outlets' outside the Mission, using marketing terminology, for instance, Indian Oil Corporation, State Bank of India, State Bank of Hyderabad. There we have only allowed one lecture, followed by some meditation sittings. And it is not surprising that we are not able to really convince a lot of people. Recently I had to address the State Bank officers in Madras. There were sixty-five participants of whom thirty-seven became abhyasis, but I would venture to think that those thirty-seven were in need of spirituality, and they grabbed the opportunity, and it was not something arising out of our talks, and things like that.

So people who need, come — I mean, people who sense an immediate need. What about people who are not conscious of this need? So the Research Institute must think of carrying the message outside the frontiers of the Mission in the coming years. Planning to conduct what we shall call residential training courses outside these premises; and we can be very professional about it, charge them relevant fees. I know organizations pay lakhs of rupees for such training courses, over a three-day period, for management. The more specialized the management, the higher the fees. I know that there are courses for which you pay up to twenty-five thousand per participant — maybe more today, I'm not, you know, aware of the modern trend in the last two, three years since I retired.

So as a suggestion, we should start looking into where we can take Sahaj Marg in the next three years, say within the area of Hyderabad, Secunderabad. For instance, we have the State Bank Officers' Training College, and Mr. Balakrishna Iyer is our abhyasi. We have a program the day after tomorrow there. But it will be one talk, two talks and some rudimentary approach, some rather casual listening by them [inaudible], so that becomes too casual, you see.

We must have a more concerted approach and take Sahaj Marg out of the Mission. You know, other missions do social service in different ways. Ramakrishna Mission does wonderful service by giving succour, poor feeding, distribution of blankets, and so on, during times of crisis, during times of pestilence, natural disasters. Our service should be in the way of bringing spirituality to people. And for this I think it is time that we take Sahaj Marg out without being shy about it, and being too arcane about it, too possessive about it, and too protective about it. And first of all try to educate people to the difference between religion and spirituality, you see. That can only happen when we have an enlightened course construction, tailor-made to suit outside audiences, where there will be no abhyasis, but where essentially we hope the message of spirituality can be carried, and people benefited, you see. Because

it is easy to benefit those who come to us; but are we willing to go out to serve? One aspect, of course, is that we are going out, creating new centres, creating more preceptors, but that is within the orbit of the Mission, shall we say.

It is arguable, of course, that when there are these new centres, there are new abhyasis. Yes, of course; but it is not in the same way, it is in the traditional way, of having a preceptor and then a few people interested come, then those abhyasis spread, you see. But I am now suggesting a different type, a radically different type of approach, that we should offer something amounting to a consultancy in spirituality, a management course in spirituality. If necessary, we can even tap corporate companies and say, well, here we have a course, which, not like other courses, you know, which aim at improving the management potential of their staff, this will change the man himself in such a way, change the managers in such a fundamental way, that they become — not better managers — but better human beings, and therefore better managers.

The traditional management schools are all trying to make better managers of the existing human material — corrupt as it is, weak as it is, timid as it is, frightened as it is, avaricious as it is. People only want more money; managers want more money; therefore, corporations want more money to pay their managers with; and if those training courses fail, it is because the human people have not been changed, humanity has not been changed.

I had recently the chance to speak before, I think it was also a bank, where they wanted me to speak about meditation and human resources development. Now, that is the right approach, you see, that a better man will make a better manager. But the same man need not be a better manager, with all the education that he has, because he is bringing to bear on this subject the same resources that he has, unmodified by any special training, unmodified by any enlightenment that he could have received. So I suggest that we should think in terms of first developing such a course. It may

take a year, it may take two years, it does not matter. But when we enter this field, we should already have what, for want of a better term I'll say, "our clients," will already appreciate, as a well tailored course, tailored to meet corporate human resources development programs.

So this is the suggestion for the future. How well can we, those who are here, and those who have participated in these courses in the past, how well can we participate in this, conduce to its development? Well, that is also a test of the efficiency of this course, that people who have participated in it can suggest ways and means, can suggest outlets, can offer suggestions on construction of the course material, inclusion of things which have not so far been included, exclusion of things which, in their opinion, are not necessary to be included, things like that.

So the SMRI should admit suggestions from all our preceptors in India and abroad, remembering that we are not offering to produce better managers, better directors, but better human beings who, *ipso facto,* will prove better in any capacity that they are put in. The idea that, *yogah karmasu kaushalam* [yoga is skill in action] should be emphasized in such material, you see; that if you are a yogi manning the rudder of your ship of commerce, it'll be better run than by anybody else.

I think the idea of blending spirituality into corporate management is the wrong approach. We must very strictly divide the field into management and human beings, and say, by raising the standard of this, the standard of this will also be absolutely guaranteed raised. I mean, it cannot be otherwise. A better man must perform better. An honest man will perform honestly. A sincere man will work sincerely. A good man will work well. But in spirituality we don't aim at partitioning and cutting into pieces human qualities, you see. We want to produce a whole man. His wholeness being that he is whole in all his approaches; he is wholly unselfish, he is wholly good, he is wholly honest, he is wholly dedicated, and he is not working for money or material returns.

This will be some sort of an experiment in creating a new culture, a new culture of consciousness, that materialism is not *per se* a fact of existence, or even a necessary fact of existence, but it has come out of an educational process, where earning one's bread and butter has become important over one's performance, and therefore, all that is emphasized today by parents, by society, is, "This will help you to earn better." The concomitant factors of character and ethics are forgotten. Therefore, as I have said so often in the past, we don't worry about how we earn our money, so long as we earn our money. The one who makes better money is a better man; one who makes the most money is the best man — he is applauded, he is lionized, he is filmed, he is photographed, his name appears in the press. Often they are able to run governments, too.

So if we are to bring about any degree of social change — how long it will take, only Master knows — but it is possible. If we are aiming at a global change of those dimensions, we cannot be satisfied by merely holding courses for a hundred and fifty people, or two hundred people here. This will cater to abhyasis; that will cater to non-abhyasis. This will produce, shall we say, potential saints for the future; that will produce better human beings, who, if they are willing and persuaded to enter into spirituality for motives other than corporate advancement, can also become spiritual giants, who are also corporate giants.

So you see, we have a twin pronged possibility. Hitherto we have restricted our endeavours to one — very laudably, very correctly — because that was not the time to think of branching out, but with the experience of — this is the third course — with the experience of three courses behind it, I am sure the Research Institute will not find this a very difficult thing to tailor-make a new pattern of advancement to be brought into society in general; starting with corporate sectors, because that is where we can have easy access; they have the budget, they have the time, and they have the provision for it. Initially, there may be some resistance. They may say, "What are you going to give us? How will it benefit

us?" But we must remember that in the West there are already training courses of this sort; even Harvard offers such a course.

In important airports in Europe, they are making meditation halls right in the middle of the airport; because with the stress and the strain of existence — you know, terrorist attacks, planes delayed, schedules upset — everybody needs to meditate. It is not only an abhyasi who meditates — everybody needs to meditate. We meditate regularly, therefore we are abhyasis. We are doing the practice systematically, therefore we are abhyasis. But everybody needs to meditate some time or the other to gather his inner resources into a package, instead of being scattered hither and thither, and collapsing in a condition of nervous collapse.

I have seen this happen in airports. Once I was in Frankfurt airport, and there was an Arab lady holding a ticket in one hand, and she didn't know where to go. She had to change flights, she knew only Arabic, and she didn't know what to do. Nobody could help her because she was not able to respond to any question. Then finally I think they managed to announce over their public address system, they wanted somebody who speaks Arabic, and then they took her on the right path. And she was in tatters psychologically, you see. I mean, if you have been in one of those situations, you will know how soul killing it is to be helpless, absolutely, in a situation over which you have no control. That is where meditation helps.

So we have to tell people that meditation can help you immediately, if you are stressed. Meditation can help you generally, if you do it very well, for most of your time. Meditation can help you specifically, if you have a specific goal of spiritual advancement. And I don't see why you should not offer all three levels of benefit to human beings, depending on their wisdom, to accept the system in its totality, when once they have felt its benefit, even in an isolated small sphere.

So this is my request to all of you, especially to the directors and the course directors of this Research Institute. And I would

like to conclude this short address by saying that if it is necessary, I would be pleased to release necessary grants for it from the Mission, which will depend on how much you want, what is the initial grant, what are the recurring grants. It would be my pleasure to support this rather adventuresome essay in the public domain. But I am sure, by Master's grace — because that was his intention, you see — I am sure, that by His grace, it would not be wanting in success.

Some people may ask, "Why do you want to start with corporate sectors?" Because it is managers we need to train first. What is the use in training a farm labourer in ethics and morality? He is already ethical and moral. He has no choice, he cannot be un-ethical, he has nothing to play with, he has two bullocks and half an acre of land. What can he do? And he is religious, because he needs the rain and the sun. So for them, you know, God is almost a natural thing in their lives. It is for this sector — the sophisticated, the educated, the high-ups — that we have to train: those who have lost touch with morality, those who have lost touch with spirituality, those who have no idea even that God exists. They only think of their managing directors and their chairmen as their gods. They have to be re-educated.

For instance, I spoke in a bank; and I think the director of the bank was a bit upset because I told him all this brouhaha about banking is rubbish. I said, "Essentially you lend money, and you recover money, and make an interest; therefore you have to keep accounts. In accounts there are only basically two functions, debit and credit. What are you doing magnifying this into some sort of mythical approach to finance and money. Two columns in a book, debit and credit, and over this you ponder, you count, you tally, you waste your money, your unions ask you for more money, then your managers ask for more money, then your directors ask for more money — what is all this nonsense."

So you see, there is a mythification of job content. What is a manager? Nobody will tell you. What he manages? Nobody will

tell you, least of all the manager himself. It is like this emperor's new clothes business, you see. Each one praising the other, patting themselves on the back, like our MPs, they vote their own salary increases, there is no audit, there is no question. So it is there we have to start our education, because they are the people who are controlling our economy, controlling prices, controlling distribution, controlling availability of essential goods. If you cannot make them moral and ethical and human in their approach to their job, our country will fail. No use in training the ninety-four percent of our population. It is at that six percent that we have to look. I cannot here mention, of course, cabinet ministers, because they are not easily approachable, they have no budgets. They would expect everything free, having got most things free in their lives. But corporate sectors, schools, colleges, banks, these should be our targets — for individual benefit of participants, for corporate benefit — where there is a large group of potentially changeable, shall we say, evolve-able people, and through them to society at large. And I say, I again repeat, that I would be pleased to make as much grants that are necessary in the beginning, hoping that eventually we can recover costs from such ventures.

Now, as far as this training course is concerned, you are all concerned — I have been talking this morning with the preceptors — for an objective evaluation. We have an evaluation form, self-evaluation form before you. I know that personally it is very difficult. When I first read Mahatma Gandhi's books, *My Experiments with Truth,* and things like that, and how he has written so openly about himself, I used to wonder how it is possible for any human being to reveal so much about himself, you see — the good, the shameful, the ugly. The good, we can all boast about. But it is the shameful, the ugly things, which we would rather not remember, that must appear. You know, like when you eat something and you vomit, it is what you cannot accept in your body that is vomited out.

Similarly, our diaries should be truthful. Not in a very self-castigating way, because some people take pleasure in unnecessary revealing — that is some sort of a masochistic approach to truth.

But we have to be honest. Diaries should be written honestly. Now here comes the problem: how honest have we been able to be, even with ourselves? Self-analysis, self-evaluation, is extremely difficult for this purpose, that whatever I would rather not remember, I will not remember. So there is no dishonesty in this; it is inability to face the self.

Now meditation is a process of facing the Self. We are trained to look inwards, to face the Self that is within. Progressively, more and more, the idea of lightness and brightness and all that, is only the progress that I can withstand His stare at me. If He wants to stare at me, let Him stare at me — I have nothing to hide. See, that sort of final achievement can come only by looking at the truth, even in pieces and bits. But if we are going to ignore a whole section of our lives, which often is a major part of our lives, and say, "No, no. I did nothing wrong. I did nothing wrong. All that I did was good," then it would be like the famous Jagjeet Singh's *ghazal* [song] where he says, "Only they who count their good deeds are people who forget all their bad deeds! Therefore they count them on their fingers." That is all they have to count.

It is not necessary, I repeat, to be masochistic, sadistic, self-castigating and say, "Oh, please forgive me." We are not asking for forgiveness. In Sahaj Marg there is no need to ask forgiveness, even from the Master, even from God. Why? Because we are the creators of our destiny. We have created the present in the past, we shall create the future in the present. And if I am to be congratulated by somebody, I must congratulate myself. If I have to be castigated, I must castigate myself. So in this understanding of the Sahaj Marg philosophy, that there is no external authority who is going to punish me or reward me for my evaluation of myself, I must be able to honestly evaluate myself.

Do I do my meditation regularly? No, or yes, as the case may be, or, sometimes. If you are not doing it, and you put yes, you are not only misleading the preceptor who is going to evaluate you, you are misleading yourself, because the more you repeat this to yourself, "I am doing meditation, I am doing meditation," you are

not doing anything. So you have to be honest with yourself, and your self-evaluation reports, for *your* good. Preceptors may be interested, may not be interested. They are expected to evaluate you on their own basis, too. And I would request the preceptors to avoid one serious error which is rampant — that out of a social knowledge and appreciation of the abhyasi, they should not evaluate him or her; they should evaluate the abhyasi as an abhyasi. Just because an abhyasi is my friend, I give him a good report. I don't mean that we are cheating. It could be totally unconscious. But the idea is that we should become conscious when we are evaluating. Who is this abhyasi? No concern. What is his name? No concern. Just look at his condition, write it. Evaluate what you think of him, objectively, then we will be coming closer and closer to the aims and the possibility that the Research Institute is aiming at, of creating a body of research material for the future.

Self-evaluation is, today, valuable for you to progress. Accurate and objective self-evaluation reported cogently and meaningfully in the form of a book, will be an extraordinarily valuable resource for future generations of abhyasis. Both will be defeated if these are not objective reports; both will be helped, if they are objective reports. So please bear this in mind. I have suggested to brother Narayana that we shall also have a session, on a purely experimental measure, of having a *purdah* [curtain] and some preceptors sitting here and an abhyasi coming in from behind, nobody knows who is the abhyasi. Six preceptors would give him a sitting, the abhyasi sitting, it may be a him, it may be her, and write down, "X — these are my observations." This was not a joke; it is a serious suggestion, because it will help.

You see, I had this idea from an experience with an *Unani* doctor, who was a muslim and who was treating a female muslim patient. She was in a *burkha* [all enveloping outer garment] completely and behind a *purdah*. He didn't know who she was. He said, "*Hath badhao*." She put out her hand. Over the sleeve of her *burkha* he felt her pulse, and he made his notes; then he asked her, and only a faceless voice was answering his questions.

Now, that may not be very useful or effective in medicine, where you must see the patient's face, look at the condition of the eyes, look at the tongue, look at this part, and this part, so many things, you see. But it is a process by which you can evaluate a faceless entity behind you, or in front of you, hidden between you and a curtain. So I would suggest this, perhaps at the culmination of this session, just as an experiment, let us say, a *tamasha* [play], and see where it leads.

Now as for the participants, we are all going to learn. It is a sad fact of the Indian mind that students forget they are here to learn, and teachers forget they are here to teach. So, often there is a mixing of roles, teachers are being taught and the students are being groomed to teaching. It is very common in our universities, in our homes, where the son becomes the father, the father has to listen to the son. All because of ego. Students must learn to listen. Suppose brother Narayana is going to talk about a particular aspect of Sahaj Marg, and he is standing up, and before he has said three words, "No, no, sir, we know all about this. We have read Babuji's books." And he goes to the next subject, "No, no, we have read all about this in *Truth Eternal*." Then what are we here for?

We must understand that the course will start assuming that you know nothing. I mean, that is the only way in which a course can be useful, can be a whole, cohesive course. We must assume that the people who have come to learn know nothing, and start teaching; because some of you know everything, some of you really know nothing. In between is a broad spectrum of knowing something and not something else. So, all of you, please listen patiently. Let the Hindu not say, "Oh, I know all about Hinduism," and go to sleep; let the Christian not say, "Oh, I am a Christian, what does he know of the Bible?" and he goes to sleep; the Buddhist says, "For heaven's sake, Hindu teaching Buddhism?" and he goes to sleep. Then what are we running this course for? So please, all of you listen patiently to everything that is said. Make notes. Try to understand what is being said, why it is being said; later on, feel free to ask questions.

For future courses within these premises, I would also request Narayana to set apart one day as a sort of workshop in inter-communication, between ourselves — review the course that has just been conducted, ask questions, answer questions, mix yourselves together, and let us see what sort of a community feeling evolves out of that. It is too late for this course, but from the fourth course onwards, perhaps time can be made for that, too. So please understand that whatever your age, whatever your status in outside life, whatever your evolution in spirituality, you are still here as a student, to learn. Play that role adequately, play that role effectively, then you will be benefited, we will be benefited; and may Master bless this.

Thank you.

11

Volunteer Your Service

Speaking about the Mission expansion, and we can see it visibly everywhere nowadays wherever you go, numbers are multiplying. I get, on an average, thirty letters a day, which is about seven hundred and fifty letters a month — half of it is from abroad, half of it is from India. Now this is a big problem, because it takes me sometimes up to six hours a day only on correspondence. I would be greatly relieved if we can post our letters to Madras under three different categories:

1. All private and confidential letters should be addressed to me only by name: P. Rajagopalachari, Gayathri, 19 North Street, Sriram Nagar, Madras-18 and marked "Private and Confidential" on top. I will open those letters myself, reply to them myself.

2. Other letters which are personal in nature, you can address to P. Rajagopalachari, Shri Ram Chandra Mission.

3. Purely official, formal correspondence concerning the Mission should be just addressed to Shri Ram Chandra Mission, 19 North Street, Sriram Nagar, Madras-18. That will be opened by somebody else, Mr. Swaminathan, or somebody, you know, who looks after accounts.

Because I don't know if you have seen, but sometimes when I am away for three to four days and I go back home, just to open my letters it takes one and half to two hours, just to open. So I will be very grateful if you all co-operate in this matter. Three types of addresses: 1) only name P.Rajagopalachari, 19 North Street, Sriram Nagar, Madras-18, top "Personal and

25 March 1991, Hyderabad

Confidential", only I will open; 2) just P. Rajagopalachari and address — no "Private and Confidential," personal — not concerning, you know, formal activities of the Mission, I may open or somebody else may open; 3) Shri Ram Chandra Mission, Madras-18, anybody can open. I will have a set of staff to deal with it — accounts matters, accounts, lawyer matters, lawyers, things like that.

I can assure you, this will save seventy-five percent of my time which now I am spending on correspondence. That is the first thing. The second thing is we are needing more and more preceptors. Up to the time of Babuji Maharaj's mahasamadhi in 1983, we had a preceptors list of about one hundred and eighty preceptors, at peak it was two hundred. After his mahasamadhi, so far five hundred and twenty-five new preceptors have been made. Of course, this is a global figure. You will be happy to know that today we have more than three hundred preceptors outside India and about the same, or a little more, four hundred preceptors, within India. Those of you who come to Pune will see. Of course, not all of you will be able to participate. I expect there will be at least four hundred preceptors for the ensuing preceptors seminar. Now that is a much larger number than the Basant figure even in 1968, 1969.

I remember my first Basant, we were forty-five people in Shahjahanpur. All of you know, most of the old abhyasis know, we used to have a *pandal* [tent] in that small area outside Babuji's house and people used to sleep there, they used to bathe there, they used to eat there; and within that small area of possibly — how much was it? — four hundred square feet, there also we used to struggle for place; because Babuji Maharaj would sit near the pillar on his verandah, the elite behind him, like Raghavendra Rao, Sarnad, Seshadri, just behind him on his right and left, and we all circling to be round, like these girls are here.

It is amusing, but I will tell you, we used to be up at three o'clock, finish our morning ablutions and be seated there by four o'clock. The satsangh was at six-thirty. Often at six o'clock we had

to go to the toilet again; we would have been comfortably tucked up under our blankets, overall blankets, over our head, everything, you see; and then this embarrassing need to go to the toilet, and the loss of a place. Because when you come back, you are not going to get the same place. Brick flooring, just a thin sacking on top of it; all the tent sides with one foot below and the sky above. All those things were there, you see. And even in those days it used to take us two hours to feed that small group. Half a dozen volunteers going around spilling daal on the floor, partly on the leaves.

So, if you see those days and see these days, I mean, there is no comparison, you see. The growth of the Mission has been enormous. For your information I can tell you, centres have been established in countries which did not exist in those days, such as, for instance, Spain, Austria, Portugal, USSR, most of the Soviet countries, you know, the Russian block countries like, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, some abhyasis in Finland, half a dozen countries in the continent of Africa. So you see, work is growing. What I am implying is, not that we have to be proud of this, but you must look at my problems; and we need more people to work. Work as preceptors, work as accountants, work in all aspects of the Mission's functioning; because unless we can create a larger and larger work force who can accept this work voluntarily and with dedication, we will be expanding without control, and that will be like a bursting balloon.

So this is an appeal to all of you, to please prepare yourself, qualify yourself, equip yourself, capacity-wise, morally and mentally, to take up responsibilities within the Mission. You know we cannot pay you anything for this, as a salary. The word salary comes from 'salt', the old Roman habit of paying their soldiers with salt, *salario* it used to be called. Maybe we can pay you a bit of salt [chuckles] for all the work that you do, you see, but nothing more. But those who believe that honest and sincere labour for the Master and the Mission is rewarded by Nature will not even think of such reward, because we don't work here for rewards.

Shashi was telling me yesterday — she was very angry with me for certain aspects of work which I had not undertaken, or ignored, or I don't know what else, you see. She is a very privileged sister from early times. She has been responsible for a lot of my misery, for a lot of my happiness also. So she was saying: you are not doing this, you are not doing that, you are not doing that. Yes, but I told her, "Where are the people to whom I can entrust this work?" Even my father used to shout at me. He said, "You are the peon; you are the postman; you are going to post office and buy stamps; you lick the stamps and then put them on the envelope; you go to the post office and post it again. You are also a preceptor, you are also President. How long do you think you can continue like this?"

So you see, it is becoming a real problem, that unless there are people prepared to share the work, there is a danger that the foreigners will take up these posts. Already you can see that I am accompanied on all my travels by a very dedicated and devoted person, Jacky. I mean the way he serves me, you cannot at all believe even, you see. I am ashamed to say that I did not serve my Master with half as much faith and devotion he is serving me, and this is the truth. Now Indians come to me and complain, "Sir, we are here." It is the same complaint that I used to hear from Uttar Pradesh kayasths who used to go to Babuji and say, *"Saab hum log hain, ye Parathasarathi ko kyon saath le jate hain, Madrasi hai.* [Sir, we are here. Why do you take this Parthasarathi with you, a Madrasi?]" So Babuji used to say, *"Bhai khud hi socho.* [Think for yourselves.]" Now I have to say that same thing when Indians come to me and say, "Why Jacky? Are we not here?" — you think. Because these are voluntary, you know.

This Jacky came into my house — when I say 'my house' I mean my spiritual house — like a puppy which enters the house and will not leave again. I did not call him. I did not know who he was. In one of our French seminars he just came into my room, started putting things in order. I said, "Who are you?" He said, "Oh! you don't know, Chariji, I am Jacky Baroukh," and he stayed,

and he has been staying there ever since. We don't pay; he travels on his own expense. He takes leave, sometimes six months in a year; and his dedication, I repeat, cannot be matched. Now that is one aspect, you see. He is also now a full preceptor in France.

You know, I have the policy of making all heads of nations and secretaries of the different nations in the world, as full preceptors, because, Narayana will understand why, they need to work from a higher level of approach. So we need people, you know; there is a very definite need. So we have to recognize that in our spiritual life we work for ourselves first, we work for our Mission next and then we work on a global or universal basis. And this progress must match your individual private progress as an abhyasi — otherwise it is no use. It's like a tree which lives for itself, but does not give any fruit. It will only become firewood.

So you see, on one hand, we are all very happy, we are all very proud that the Mission is growing: Sir, how many centres? Sir, how many preceptors, sir? Okay. What about the next generation? Where are they going to come from? And don't think that you are not fit. Nobody can say who is fit and who is not fit. And secondly, even if you are not fit, anybody can be made fit. What is necessary? It is your willingness to serve, your desire to serve, your need to serve; because I tell you, when you come to a particular spiritual level, you feel a need to serve. It is as if a candle were to realize that if it is left in the drawer unused, it is in some way not justifying its existence. I should burn, I should burn, suppose the candle were to say.

So you see, we must feel responsibility on two planes. One, the individual plane; we as householders have to run our houses properly, look after our *grihastha ashram* [householder's life] properly, train our children properly, look after our wives or husbands, as the case may be, properly, go to our job properly, earn with honesty, simplicity — all this is in the ten maxims of Sahaj Marg — develop properly, develop with integrity, develop with dedication, develop to the highest possible limits. And then

understand that you have to develop also this capacity to serve the Mission and the Master. And in serving Him, serve humanity; otherwise we are being in some way, shall I say, not fulfilling the promise that Babuji expects of us.

I had once a long argument with Babuji. He was talking, you know, big, that Lalaji has given you this, Lalaji has given you that.

I said, "It's all selfish. Do you mean to say you are blessing me with this because of your wonderful love for me?" I was a bit annoyed with something.

He said, "Why do you say that?"

I said, "You made me a preceptor so that I can work for you. Suppose I refuse to work for you, will you continue?"

He said, "Why should I? If you don't work for me, why should I keep you as a preceptor?"

I said then, "You made me a secretary, because you want me to work for you."

He said, "Naturally. Would you make a secretary who you don't want to work for you?"

Then I said, "You appointed me as your representative and made me the ultimate slave of yourself."

He said, "That is Lalaji's grace."

I was almost tempted to use a four-letter word. I was so angry. I said, "That again is for your purpose."

Then, you know, with a very compassionate smile, he said, "Look, Parthasarathi, God does for His purpose and if you are not going to fulfil His purpose, He does not have to do anything for you."

Now, that is the final truth, you see. It may appear selfish from our side, that he helps us only so that we can help him. But

in that mutuality of help lies our benefit, our ultimate liberation, you see, final liberation.

So please realize that we have these responsibilities on two fronts, two levels, two planes. And I am happy that even young girls like Madhumati, you know, come forward to volunteer for the job. She is eighteen only, incidentally. She will probably be the youngest preceptor in India today — why 'probably', actually. Now this is the sort of voluntary approach that we want. "Please use me. I wish to serve. I feel the need to serve." And altruism plays a big part here, you see; because when you know there are no tangible rewards, all this talk of liberation, realization, merger — okay, we accept it, because Babuji said, Lalaji said; we believe them. But what are we going to see and when?

When Babuji first time used the word approach in talking to me about the spiritual approaches, I said, "What is the approach?"

He said, "It means, that at the moment of death you will go up to this point."

I said, "Not before?"

He said, "No. It is like you have a ticket to travel day after tomorrow from Shahjahanpur to Lucknow. You have the ticket, but travel will be day after tomorrow."

Then I asked him, I said, "Babuji will you let me die now?"

He said, "Why?"

I said "I want to prove that it is there, it exists. How do I know?"

He said, "Don't you trust me?"

I said, "That is why I am still here. But even with all my trust and faith in you, still there are moments when we would like to see something, you see."

He said, "Don't you experience in meditation?"

I said, "Yes, but I don't experience the stages of meditation, I experience a condition."

Then he said, "This is the reality of the spiritual life, you see, that everything is taken on trust."

Spirituality cannot be shown. Spirituality cannot be weighed out and given. It cannot be put on a certificate. With this faith, we continue; and the faith is because the Master is an honest person. He has nothing to gain from telling lies. He himself trusted in his Master and we see before us, that he was there, what he was, what he is. So you see, when we work for such sorts of intangible and future-oriented rewards, that is the highest altruism.

So please remember that He serves us, so that we may serve Him. He helps us, so that we may help Him. He enables us to grow, so that we may enable others to grow; it is like a child becoming a man having his own child who becomes a man, then he has his own child. Like this, you know, the race propagates itself and this spiritual *paramparaa* [lineage] has to propagate itself in a similar manner.

So this is an appeal, you see, for people to prepare themselves. I cannot possibly pick you out and say, "You come. You come. You come." In spirituality that is not permitted. You have to volunteer and offer your service. But please make sure that you are able to do something for the Mission before you volunteer. And make sure that that ability you create in yourself as soon as you can; because there is urgent need of workers for the Mission everywhere.

When I mentioned that I was worried about Pune, it was because they have twenty-five abhyasis and only two people on whom Kulkarni can really depend. And yet he has the courage to take on a job like this, you see. I admire that man's... I don't know whether it is sheer bravado, or guts, or childish innocence; it is like a child walking up to a lion and patting it on the nose. But he will do it; and the lion will be tamed by him, you see.

So this is what I want to say today, that the Mission is a mission, as Shashi pointed out yesterday, it is not Pune celebration or Hyderabad celebration, it is a Mission celebration, being held in Pune, or in Hyderabad, as the case may be. And it is the duty of all abhyasis of the Mission to co-operate in this, abhyasis everywhere. So this is my earnest request to all of you, and I hope Babuji will bless all of you, so that every one of you can become a pillar of the Mission.

Thank you.

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Inner Growth — More Essential Than the Outer

Good evening to all of you. I think the roles have been reversed by my colleague, spiritual colleague. So I have a problem, to include the 'why' of meditation too with 'how' of meditation. It is, I think, a tragedy of the modern times that you have to prepare such a subject as the 'why' of meditation. I don't know if State Banks, and other institutions like this, ever teach you something about the culture of this country. Because if there had been in our education a cultural foundation, such a subject would not be possible to be discussed in public. It is a sad thing that in a country like India, which owes its existence to the ancient traditions, holy traditions of the rishis, the Sanatana Dharma, the Vedic tradition, where the tradition of meditation — *tapasya* as they used to call it — has been the very foundation, the rock upon which our culture, our traditions, our very existence has been built, in such a country, today we have to say, "Why meditate?"

I hope you will not be offended if I say that this shows the degree of degradation that our society has reached. It is like saying, "Why eat?" I mean, if somebody had to organize a seminar 'Why Eat', people would laugh, nobody would be there to listen to it. So to me it is shocking that whenever we speak of 'why meditate', there are more and more people coming to listen to it. On one side, it shows their interest; on the other side, it shows the tragedy of the deprivation of the fundamental values of life, that more and more people want to know why to meditate.

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So you see, every picture has two sides; and economic prosperity, industrialization of the country, modernized education, if they are going to cut at the roots of our civilization, the roots of our inner civilization, of our inner culture — dharma [righteousness] is after all an internal thing. It is not the few paisa that we throw to the beggar, or the honesty that we bring to bear to our job, it is the inner upholding of a sense of final and ultimate values that dharma should reflect. In India, dharma has always been considered to be the greatest.

Those of you who are familiar with the Mahabharata know that Karna could not be killed finally because Dharma Devata came and stood by his side and his life could not be taken. That you know the significance — perhaps some of you do — that when Krishna finally took up the form of a Brahmin *yaachaka* [beggar], he took away the values of his dharma. He said, "Give me all the *phala* [fruit] of your dharma." Then only poor Karna could die. That is the value of dharma. *Dharmam thalaikaakkum* we say in Tamil: dharma protects existence.

So when you are afraid of existence, it means you have lost the protection of dharma that we had. Which means that there is no dharma. So how to re-establish the dharma? The only way is to do what the ancients did, when they created the *dharmic* pattern upon which our culture, our civilization, our land, has been founded, and re-established Dharma.

Now it is another sad fact, that Lord Krishna in the Gita says, "I come again and again when *adharma* [non-righteous conduct] shows up its head, to destroy the evil-doer and to restore dharma." So this business of establishing the basic pattern of our existence, having it eroded away, re-establishing it, bewailing for the next *avatar* to come, this seems to go on, in a sort of sense, perennially — cyclically, as we say — *avatar* after a*vatar,* dharma after dharma*, yuga* after *yuga*. Sometimes I wonder if it is not a nauseating pattern. Are we not caught up in one of these giant catherine wheels of existence, where we are passing those two opposites of dharma and *adharma*? Is not perhaps dharma itself susceptible to

the law of opposites? So these sorts of speculations some of you officers should also indulge in. Rajagopal was mentioning about the traumas of the life of a State Bank officer. But I can assure they are no less in any other office.

In fact, I am sometimes astonished why in the banks they have so much trauma. After all, it's a question of lending money and recovering money. What is so erudite about it? What is so esoteric about it? All this talk of ledgers, and books of accounts, and balances, and credits and debits. Essentially, it's as a matter of credit and debit. It has become so mystified, esotericized. I think all jobs get esotericized ultimately, when the job contents lose meaning, and it becomes something like the emperor's new clothes — that which is not has to be mystified beyond reason, beyond acceptance, beyond credibility, and everybody has to accept and say, "Yes, yes, we are great." India has always been great in this sense; we have always found ourselves a great nation. I don't know whether it was capable of being substantiated or not. Even today we claim: *Saare jahaan se achhaa, hindustan humaaraa. Bharat humaaraa mahaan hai* [India is great], all these sort of things. Patriotic hymns, some on festive occasions, everybody patting everybody else on his back. Exuberating in a sense of patriotism, which really doesn't exist in the heart of the average Indian. The average Indian exists for himself. I don't think we have a social conscience or a cultural conscience.

So we have to re-create, if society at large is to exist happily, comfortably — at least with an average sense of comfort and happiness. "*Sarvejanaa sukhino bhavantu* [May all people lead a happy life]," we say on every occasion. If that is to be true, then there must be a sharing. A sharing of what? Not of wealth, because if you distribute wealth, we will have nothing left. This is the fear, why even rich people don't give to beggars, "If I keep on giving, will I have something left for myself?" Even people who have wells with proven capacity for water, in times of drought they will not allow water to be drawn, because, "Suppose my well fails." Well, money can fail, but how can a well fail? Even

assuming it does, can you hold on to your well full of water if all the neighbours are starving for water? Give them one day, they will attack you, destroy you and take over your well. You have seen this happening recently in the Middle East, when all the Western powers fought together, humiliating the Middle East and Arabs, took over virtually, because they wanted to ensure whatever oil is left goes to them.

Capacity, greed, attacks on neighbour's property, is not restricted to single household thefts. It has become national, it has become international, it will become global. All because we have a material civilization where each one's job is the best, each one's job is most protected. Rajagopal was mentioning unions. I don't mean to criticize unions, or say I am against unions, because I have faced unions myself across the bargaining table for several years. Unfortunately, I had to do it. But when you have a union which only protects your rights and not your duties and responsibilities, what sort of union is it, you see? And that officers should need unions is a shame to this country. That people who are drawing ten thousand rupees, fifteen thousand rupees, should have unions which ask for more — it is an ultimate scandal I should say of our society.

Of what does it reflect? Not merely the avariciousness and the greed to possess more. On one side it shows the erosion of values — not only of morals, but of the value of money itself. I suppose there should be some economic axiom which says, "The more of money in circulation, the less valuable it is." Most of you are economists here, I assume. When there is more money, it has less value. But officers at least should be intelligent enough to know, that when they get more and more, they are really getting less and less — though all of you know the marginal theory of economics. But greed, fear of the future, sense of security vested in physical things like houses and money and refrigerators and cars and unions, this is what we have created today, and it is a shame. Why? Not because we are afraid of the future, not because we seek security — I mean every man has a sense of fear of the

future and needs a sense of security — but that we should seek security in the external aspects of the physical existence and not in my Self, where, according to our Vedas, our Upanishads, God himself resides.

We are putting our faith in a union when we have a god inside upon whom we could depend for eternity, not just for our twenty years or twenty-five years of a silly existence in a bank. We pretend to be great, when we know all that we are doing is taking your money and giving out money, balancing cash every day — a traumatic experience. Often for a few *naya paisa* [coins] difference, you have to spend three days reconciling your accounts. Lockers! Yes. So what is wonderful about lockers? If something is lost, the bank doesn't indemnify.

So you see, the foolish citizen comes to banks to put his wealth in lockers, knowing that the bank does not guarantee the safety of that locker for which you charge exorbitant rates. I was discussing with Mr. Iyer, that if you add up the rental of all your lockers and divide it by the square foot of your vault, you would probably be charging something like one thousand rupees a square foot. I mean, it is atrocious, you see, how you make money just to pay yourself more and more. And when people criticize members of Parliament for passing legislation to upgrade their own salaries, should you not also criticize your own unions and yourselves for upgrading your own salaries, by threatening to stop all activity of banks, holding the public to ransom? Do you not have a moral responsibility? I say no, because if you had, you would not indulge in such things.

There is no use of talking of education, you see. You are all educated. Well, if your actions are to reflect upon your education, what is the value of this education that you have reached, that you have received? You should ponder over this, because you are the affected persons, the bank people. "Is my education worth something?" It's no use saying that man becomes an animal man, becomes a human man, becomes a divine man. Why is he an animal man? People say, "My karma sir, *praarabdham* [result of

the karma starting in this life], *sanchitam* [accumulation of karma from the previous birth]." Wonderful in Sanskrit. But why? It only shows that in the past too, I was stupid, I was foolish, I was ignorant, I was materialistic. Well, I was, in the past, it is not a scandal; but that I should be in the present too, is a shame. Should I continue to be that in the future, too? "What were you last year?" "Fourth class student." "This year?" "Fourth class." "Next year?" "The way things are going, sir, I will repeat fourth class." What would you think of such a fellow?

In the last life I was an animal man. This life I am an animal man, because of the effects of the last life. But what about this life? I am still an animal man. So predictably, in my next life, I am going to be still an animal man. We consider this progress. It's very nice to have wonderful buildings, hostel blocks, and the tragedy of a meditation room which is never used. Today, only toilets are used properly, you see. We need clean toilets. Meditation rooms are going a-begging. We are too busy. Doing what? Passing debits and credits.

I am talking of debits and credits because I am presumably addressing, this time, bank officers here, though the majority of the group is our own meditation group. But you are the target of my talk [chuckles] [laughter], and I wish that a sense of purpose should be restored to our life. Not merely the external purpose of building up a magnificent life, comforts, luxuries, protections for the future, safe bank balances, you know — assets on paper, in paper, in metals, hidden wealth. After all, gold is valuable only because its production is limited. Diamonds are valuable only because the diamond kings of this world create every year a new stock which will not depress the prices of the old stocks.

Why don't you seek something of intrinsic value, which is valuable in itself — not because of short supply or large supply — which will be as valuable today as it will be a million years hence in the future? Where is it? Should you not ask, "How are the rishis so peaceful? How could they live in jungles among animals, tigers, lions, bathing in Himalayan rivers, living on virtually nothing, with

snakes around their necks? What was it they found there? What is the peace that they got? How did they get it? Did they have bank balances? Well, they didn't even have cash on hand. No cheque books. Not even a banana left over for the next meal. Because the tradition was, that even when you went begging (*yaachaka*) you could only beg for that particular meal. If you had anything left over, you gave it away. The impact, the emphasis, the whole thrust of existence, was on the present.

In today's existence, our emphasis is two-pronged: one on the past, one on the future. "Sir, I have been a clerk for six and a half years. When are you going to give me a promotion?" "Sir, my scale has not been changed. It is going at the pace of a goods train in India. When will I get an express train scale?" Why do you want it? "For my future." What are we doing with our present?

So you see, we are duping ourselves in the present; throwing away our present; misusing our present. How can you possibly create a valuable future for yourself? The thrust of spirituality is, that there is no future, there is no past — they are fantasies created by your mind. If you want proof of it, you look at a bitch which has had puppies — say five puppies. You take them one by one away, and the bitch knows very little about what's happening. It lives in the present; it still has three puppies, it feeds three puppies. Two hours later only two puppies; for a moment it may look confused, then it is adjusted to the situation. But we are always tallying our past balances, predicting our future balances. Even individuals today are worried about cash flow. For heaven's sake! As if industrialists have not gone crazy enough, and banks have not gone crazy enough, individuals are going crazy. "Sir, I have no cash balance. My cash flow is poor." A man who is earning three hundred rupees in a job is talking of cash flow, cash balances. All jargon picked up from friends in banks. "How is your cash flow, brother?"

So you see, we have to bring the sense of security into its right dimension, appreciate that if I live life today in the exact manner in which it should be lived, I have no fears of the past, no fears

of the future. If I don't, I am going to die as anybody else is going to die. I was born as every fool on earth was born. Every king was born; every king died. Every philosopher was born; he died. Every rishi was born; he died. If tradition is correct, even Rama was born; Rama died. Krishna was born; Krishna died. What was the value of their existence? It is what they did between life and death. They did not amass wealth; rishis never had it, kings threw it away, emperors ran away from it. If you want to see it, see it in the lives of the great ones.

Rama was sent to the forests, he adjusts, you know, without even thinking about it. He said, "Yes father," and left. Think of his wife's greatness. She did not say, "No, no, I will remain here safe. You come back when your time is over. I'll be waiting for you." This is the modern lovers' episode, you see, "I will wait. You come." All our cinema songs are based on this. "Where are you going?" "No, no, I am coming." And he never returns. And then you have these old songs: *o jaane wale* [song about the departing beloved], et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Love always seems to be centred on a distant person, even in human love. Why not on something which is near? Why not on something which is here, right here?

So in our loves, we must love Him who is eternally with me, who is eternally available, who is infinitely available, who is ultimately available. This is a definition of God. No point in loving things which will decay in any case. The most beautiful woman will become a hag given thirty years, much less if she is misused. The most beautiful cut glass piece your son is going to throw away someday when you are dead and gone, or sell it for three rupees. The most beautiful manuscripts have been sold in religious frenzy, destroyed in religious frenzy, waste paper. So what are we depending on?

Spirituality says, go back to the wellsprings of creation, of creativity — the two are one — He who is within you. He who is really you you have forgotten. This trapping of flesh and blood you have accepted as yourself. You are shaving it, barbering

it, manicuring it, bathing it, dirtying it, filthying it, decaying it, diseasing it, depriving it finally. Depravity is always of the body, never of the soul. So the ancient dharma says, "Don't worry about the past. Who has not done it? Are you the only man who has womanized, or gone drinking?"

I was amused when Rajagopal was mentioning about the administrative staff college. He described it as an enormous bar with a college attached. Not a college with a bar attached; a bar with a college attached to it! Because the stresses and strains of, presumably, an administrative education are so tense that you need your bit of wine or your whisky in the evening to relieve those strains. This is a fallacy, you see, that education can cause us strain — it should give us relief! The more educated I am, the more I must be in command of myself and therefore of my environment. If education is going to make me more tense, put up my blood pressure, increase the sugar content in my blood, what on earth is that education valuable for? If every class has to be followed by a tot of whisky, or brandy, or rum, what is that education doing to me, for me?

You people are just going through this, milling process, as if you are a sheet of paper printed — chatak, chatak, you see. So you are given a false sense of values, false sense of ethics, false sense of your importance to society, your importance to yourself; and like sheep we are following this tradition that any IAS officer is superior to everybody else. We blame the British for their Indian Civil Service, saying the Indian Civil Service sold us into slavery. They rode on horses and killed the protesters who were the followers of Mahatma Gandhi. What are we doing? Only thing, we don't ride horses; we ride cars. I mean, few of you could mount a horse safely; they at least had that ability, you see.

So you see, this scandal of a civilisation where an educational system, a social system, which creates institutions which are only pretending to serve the public, but serving itself and its constituents. Don't you think this is the ultimate corruption? And then all of us talk very, what should I say, as if we are deeply concerned

about our brothers and sisters all over the world. "What to do, sir? Ninety-five percent people are illiterate in this country? Ninety-seven percent are below the poverty line." Yes, but three percent are above the poverty line. What are you doing for them? We never ask ourselves this question, you see. "What am I doing for my countrymen? What am I doing for myself?" Am I only here like squirrels to amass nuts which I will never eat. Wealth that you may leave behind, may hit the headlines of the newspapers, but not one *naya paisa* of it you are going to take with you. So-and-so left twenty-seven crores of property and his three sons are fighting over it. You know the tragedy is in the second generation; the more you leave, the more problems you leave behind for your progeny. The man who leaves three rupees behind has no quarrelling family. If you leave three lakhs, the quarrels are bigger. If you leave three crores they will probably shoot each other.

So we are contributing to this by adding to our wealth every day. Should we not think of the future, not only of ourselves, but of our children? What am I doing? Am I leaving this estate for them to kill themselves, or should I leave them something which will glorify them, contribute to their future? So you see, we are not only ruining ourselves, we are ruining our future, in terms of tragedy of future generations of mankind; leaving them not only wealth to quarrel over, but a wrong sense of values to adopt, to pass on to their generations after them.

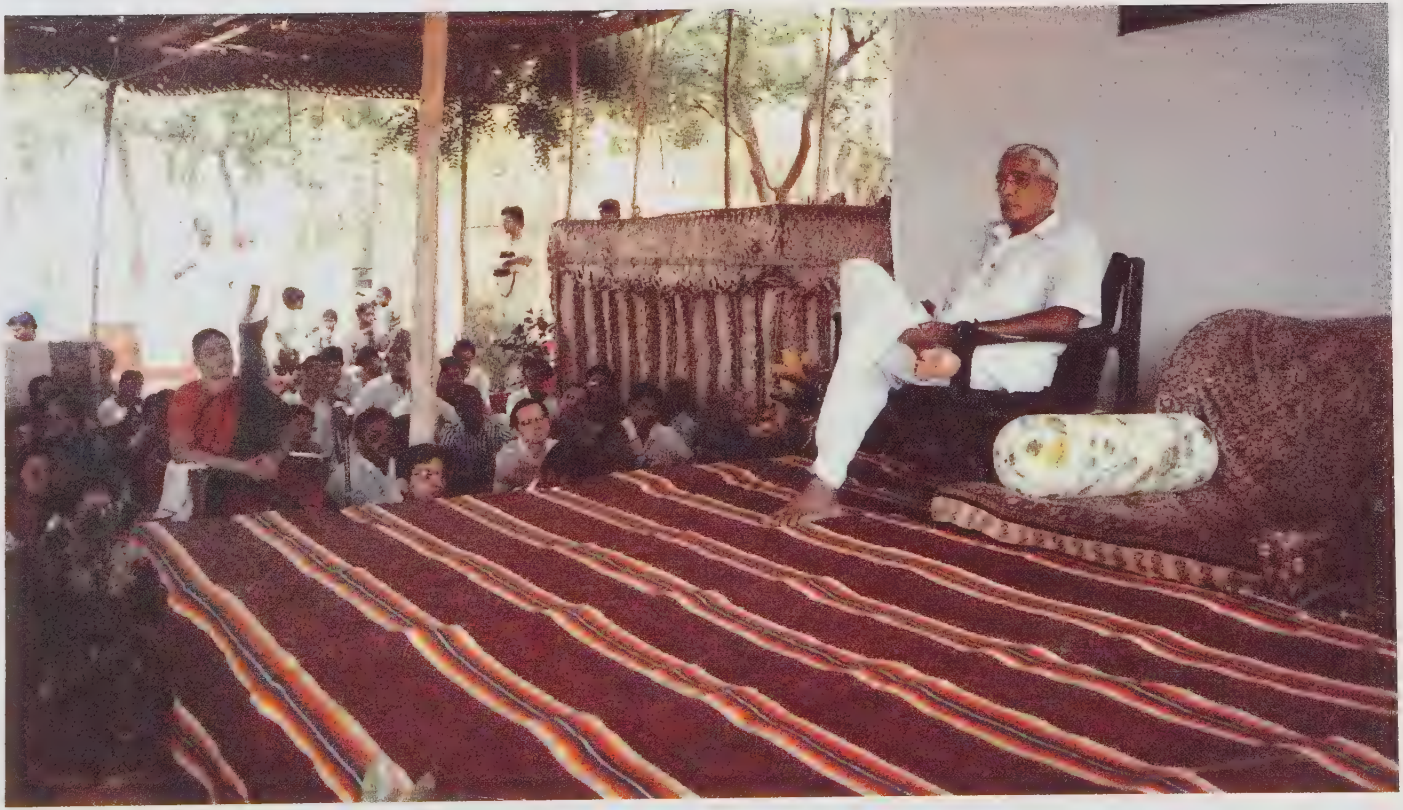
So why we have to meditate is a very serious business; and you should all carefully think over it. Don't depend just on what I am going to say here. It may be foolish, it may be biased, it may be stupid; it doesn't matter. After all, if you put a cock in your garden, it will only crow. If you put a dog there, it will bark. But it is *you* who are responsible for yourself. I may come and talk to you for half an hour, or forty minutes. Some of you will say, "Good," some of you will say, "Stupid. You know, he talks about banks because some officer must have misbehaved with him!" [laughter] Why some officer, every officer misbehaves with us. But that is not why we are talking here about banks. We are talking about

banks because, hopefully, if you are able to influence at least a few banks here, the future for the banking sector, as a service sector to serve the common man of this country, which is the platform of every stupid political party that comes into existence, can probably be fulfilled.

In this country, the concept of service doesn't exist at all. If you go to a bank to cash a cheque, you will probably have a man whose wife refused to sleep with him the previous day; he is angry, and he throws your cheque around, throws a paper at you. Politeness week, courtesy week — why do we need a courtesy week? Why don't we have a courtesy year? After all, it's my money I am withdrawing from the bank, not your money. Wait for a while, "No, no, sir, I will just post this ledger and come in ten minutes." Why? "Cash balance is not done yet, accountant has asked me to do this first." So the customer has to wait.

I hope all of you will go to foreign countries and see foreign banks. That should be where you should be trained, not here. These institutions are repetitive, repeating the same old, blah, blah, blah *ad nauseam,* you see. We are great, we were always great, we shall always be great. If you have read Rudyard Kipling, you are the *bandarlog* — the monkeys. "We are always great." "Why?" "Because we always say so, so it must be true." This is the philosophy of India which, very perceptively, Kipling wrote about probably one and a half centuries ago.

So you see, we have to wake up, knowing that when we serve others, we are serving ourselves. A bank should base its good name, its fame, on its service. Not on the bank balances. I am shocked to see the balance sheet plastered on the wall here — for whose benefit I don't know. You are all State Bank officers, presumably you could have got this [inaudible]. What for? What does it matter to the common man how much profit your bank makes? We know it, you see; we suspect it. We read the figures; we suspect it is much more, hidden balances they are called. When are we going to wake up? Serve people by serving yourself first. He who cannot serve himself, cannot possibly know the value of



service. I cannot blame you, because, you know, nobody has ever taught you to serve yourself. They have only taught you to be selfish, which is not self-service, it is self-destruction.

So why meditate? Precisely for this reason: that let me bring into myself a perception which no school can give, which no parental heritage can give, which no ancient *gotra* [lineage] can confer upon me, which even the Vedas cannot give. *I have to give to myself by practice.* If you want to know where this truth comes from, read the Bhagavad Gita where Lord Krishna is asked by Arjuna, "What should I do?" He says, "Do abhyas." Abhyas means systematic practice.

So you see, the 'why' of meditation is not that we are going to become rishis or yogis or have this grand finale of yoga where I and my Lord unite. It's a crazy idea. I and my Lord are already united; He is in me, He is my lord and master. I am a pretender — pretending to be myself. So with whom should I unite? This misconception is perhaps the greatest. Because I have heard people saying, "If I cannot achieve harmony with my wife, how on earth am I going to ever achieve a harmony sufficient enough to bring me to my god and unite me with him?" A very valid question. Until you are told that He is right here and you don't have to mate with Him, you have only to recognise His presence, allow Him to work — you subside into a sort of passive acceptance of His wishes and His will. This is what spirituality is about. And then what is the guarantee of success? That what I, a stupid animal human being, considered great, would be far, far, far unimaginably greater, if I could only allow Him to operate through me. This is the principle of which, when a clerk cannot do the work, the officer goes and helps; when the officer cannot do, the manager goes and helps. The superior comes to the rescue of the inferior.

The more educated must come to the help of the less educated. The rich must come to the help of the poor. The strong must come to the help of the weak. God must come to the help of the humanity that he has created. When will he come? He is eternally available. Have I to call him? No, not at all. It is another

crazy aspect of religions that we have to call God. From where will He come? He is here. It is like my telling my stomach, "Stomach, please digest my food." And it says, "Yes, yes, don't bother."

So what should I do? All that I have to do is sit in meditation, turn my attention inward — instead of always looking out, look in — and see whether it is the truth that He is there. Can I establish contact with Him with whom I have lost contact, presumably an eternity ago? Is it easy? It is as easy as your getting into your own bedroom. You don't have to knock on your bedroom, and have somebody open from inside; unless you have an uncooperative wife, who doesn't want to see your face; which is rather rare, you see, in India at least. So what are we to do? We are only to sit and meditate, try to establish first the idea that He is there; deepen that idea until we see the Presence, and then get into contact and say, "My Master, my Lord, my God, I, a pretender, recognize you, my Master, you are the eternal Master; with you here, I can possibly never die. I have therefore no fear of death." Immortality is the first result. How can I die when my God is inside me? He is me. How can God die? When we have fear of death, we are killing God with every fear of death that we have.

You can lose your money in your pocket, because it is something external to you. What is internal to you, what is essentially in you, how you can lose? You can lose your brain, you can lose your stomach, you can lose your liver, you can have your kidneys transplanted, but you cannot have a God transplant in your heart. From where? He will say, "I am here, as I am everywhere." From where will you cut, and where will you put it? So you see, then comes the final aspect that, "Lord Almighty, I give up everything to your control," no hidden things.

So this is in very short and subtle form, the idea of spirituality — all the esoterization and the sanskritization and the mystification, throw it away. It is all rubbish. That is done by religion which seeks to rob you of your money, makes you to do *parihaara, prayaschitta* [expiation], and your *nitya karma* [daily rituals], and your *anushtana* [that which has to be followed] so that it may

continue to take its donations from you — what they call fees, *dakshina*.

In spirituality you don't have to pay a *naya paisa* [single coin] to anybody. You find that ultimate object, which is the only thing worth finding and keeping, and retaining, which is the God in you. So this is why we meditate. How we meditate, I will request Br. Narayanan to tell you briefly the mechanics of our meditation, after which we shall have a meditation session for about half an hour — with this cautionary statement, that it is not a sample. This is not a mango that you cut a piece of it and taste it, and then buy a dozen. But it will help you to feel, or at least to have the courage to sit with your eyes closed for half an hour. It is not so easy, I assure you.

I remember once when I was under army training, the whole regiment was put standing at attention while our commander was going to read the map, because we have to have an attack formation and a defence formation with all the plays of military warfare, and that blighter forgot us. And you cannot imagine how difficult it is to stand at attention for three minutes, four minutes, five minutes; sixth minute, somebody was falling, like a log; seventh minute, another man is falling; eventually we ended up with fifteen of the whole platoon on the floor. When we set out on the march, I found an empty truck following us. I asked my captain, "What is that truck for?" He said, "You'll find out." We had to march twenty-four miles, and every mile there was one or two falling. And they were just lifted up and put into the truck.

So this is the process of selection, of filtration. In spirituality the first problem is how to sit still, how to sit still with eyes closed. We all run away from our homes, to parties, to drinks, to, you know, wine, women and dances, only because we are afraid of the house. What are we afraid of in the house? It is ourselves. Today the average human being cannot be alone for half an hour. It is a funny thing that in a huge block, where there are three hundred and sixty flats, and when you can just tap on the door and hear the man snoring on the next side, yet you feel lonely and alone

at night. See, this is the desolation that has crept into our lives. Because the only thing that can give us courage through the night, is this fellow here [pointing to the heart]. By day, we think we are great, we are well paid; next year I am going to purchase a new car, I can have a housing loan at four percent interest — all these fripperies and frapperies of a false existence surround us. At night, who is there? Housing loan? You say that, "I must last through the night." Next year's car? Yes, but I must survive till the morning. Therefore the Veda says, you know, the old tradition says, "He protects you when you are asleep. But make sure He is there to protect you," and in that we are prepared to assist.

I was talking of the tragedy of an empty meditation hall. So much assets of the bank wasted — tax payers' money presumably — I hope you will have the good sense to put it into use; and I place at your disposal our services in establishing a community of meditators here; and conduct a regular meditation session, if you so desire.

Thank you.

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What Sahaj Marg Is

Q: Mr. Rajagopalachari, you are the spiritual Master of our Mission, the Shri Ram Chandra Mission. This is a method of Raja Yoga called Sahaj Marg; can you tell me something about what Sahaj Marg is?

PR: Oh, that is a tall order!

Q: Yes, but it is for people in a country where there are many different forms of meditation already existing; many already coming from India and from the East, as well as the West, and it's important to know something about this particular method.

PR: Yes, in India we have several yogas, as you probably know. We have the karma yoga, the bhakti yoga, the raja yoga. These are the three main yogas. In karma yoga, it is supposed to be the yoga of action — that is, you can gain a spiritual elevation by doing your duty. In bhakti yoga, it is by devotion. In gyana yoga, they say it is the way of knowledge. But Lord Krishna in the Gita says very specifically that that is the longest of all ways; they take many many lives. And the most important is raja yoga, where we deal with the mind; the theory being, that it is with the mind that we interact with this world, with this universe, and whatever goes wrong when the mind goes wrong in its action, subsequent action, and everything goes wrong with the result. So by regulating the mind we can regulate our lives, and by regulating our lives we can regulate our destination. That is the broad theory.

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Q: In Australia already, for example, there are different forms of Raja Yoga existing. What is it about Sahaj Marg that is different from other forms?

PR: Well, I wouldn't like to emphasize what is different, or what is better, because I believe that a way must be effective, and I believe Sahaj Marg to be effective. That something is good, doesn't make it effective. For instance, apples are good, but they are not effective tools of liberation, you know. Girls are good, but they are not effective tools of liberation either. On the contrary! So we believe Sahaj Marg to be, today, perhaps the most effective method of quick spiritual elevation.

Q: Why is it quick?

PR: Why is it quick? Because, precisely for three reasons. It is a practical method, uncluttered by theory and the need for knowledge and things like that. It is practical. As my guruji, my Master, used to say, "Read and enjoy. Do and feel." We can go one step more and say, "Do and achieve." I mean, obviously, if you are going somewhere and you have to walk, you have to walk before you can reach that place.

Secondly, there is the system of cleaning, as we call it, which I have not found in the literature in any religion yet. By that we are able to get rid of all, what we call, samskaras of the past, which we have accumulated by thoughts and actions; because every thought leaves an impression. If you say, "Aha, this ice cream is jolly good," then you have an impression. And next day you want to eat the same thing. You eat it more, then the impression deepens. Similarly, actions — commonly you can have this experience that if you see something tragic going on, it makes such an impression on your mind that you cannot get rid of it for sometimes months and years. Here, it is cleaned off. It's as if you have a slate, and you just wipe it clean with a wet rag. Now that makes you receptive to this spiritual transmission which is the real elevating factor.

So we have the practicality of the system. We have the cleaning, which ensures that the receptacle is clean. And we have

the transmission, which ensures that what is put into it makes you a better and better human being, until you achieve the pinnacle of human existence, which we call divinization.

Q: What is transmission?

PR: Transmission is the passing, by the guru, of his own yogic essence. Transmission is the technique, shall we say, by which a guru or a master is able to pass his own essence from his heart into the heart of the practicant, or the student, or the abhyasi, as we call him in Sanskrit.

Q: So it is necessary to have a Master for this?

PR: Well, if you need transmission, you need a Master. If a girl wants a baby, she must have a husband. If a sick man wants to be cured, he needs a doctor. If you are ignorant, and you want to be taught, you need a teacher. I don't see what is the difficulty about having a Master.

Q: In Western countries, or in a country like Australia, for example, there have been many different gurus who have had prominence, and some people are very positive towards this, some people very cynical; and in general, I think, like in many Western countries, there is a scepticism towards the concept of master — even towards the concept of God — because of the past religious history.

Can you talk to us a little more about for you... the role your master had for you? What is the benefit of a master, because for many Western people it is not evident.

PR: It is not evident because most of them have not tried to feel what is in it. You know, if I say this ice cream is good, and you want me to prove that it is good before you will eat it, there is no way of proving it. A single spoonful will instantly prove to you all that you need to know about it.

Q: Yes.

PR: So we have to test it. Some things have to be tested by tasting; some things have to be tested by touching, like the softness of

velvet — you cannot prove; but if you touch it, you know it. The goodness of a human being, you can experience only by being with that person. And this has also to be tested. Prove to me that this egg is good, before I buy it. What can you do? The simple test is to float it on water. But even after that, it may be addled inside; nobody can ever know. So where we are dealing with machines, or with man made stuff, tests are possible. You can have a test conducted by somebody else and go on that report. But where it is yourself that you are working upon, you are yourself the object of the test; you are the tester, and you are going to be the result of your own test.

So for these three reasons, spiritual systems have to be tested by the individual concerned. You cannot go on anybody else's report. In fact, you can say this is, perhaps, the most subjective of things, that personal knowledge must be acquired by the person who seeks knowledge of himself. The system can only help.

Q: And how do you look for a master, a guru, who is suitable?

PR: Well, my Master used to say, if you sit at home and pray, he will come to you. But the prayer must be sincere. We don't think, for instance, of sitting and saying, "Oh, I want a tall handsome man with grey hair." Not like that, you see. You will get a tall handsome man with grey hair, who will probably rob you of what you have got. You must pray and say, "Lord, send me a spiritual guide who will take me to you." That's all. And if the prayer is sincere, you will find that he comes. That is how my Master came to me.

Q: And what of the method itself you talk about. There is the process of cleaning and the process of transmission. This is a system of meditation; what practically is involved for anybody who is interested?

PR: Well, practically what is involved, is yourself. This is one system in which unless you put the whole of yourself, you are not going to get anything out of it. I mean, suppose we say you have to meditate one hour, and you meditate ten minutes; you are not

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going to get one sixth the benefit. It doesn't work proportionally. It's like walking. Suppose the doctor says, "Walk three miles," and you walk a hundred yards every day; you are not going to get any benefit out of it. So this is a total involvement of yourself, with yourself.

Q: There are many different forms of meditation that exist. What specifically is meditated upon in this method?

PR: It is unfortunate that such a question should reflect the ignorance that is generally pervading, you see. There are *not* different systems of meditation. Meditation means, to think of one thing continuously. Now the object of meditation can differ. Where systems differ is in the object of meditation. Like food means the same thing, though what we eat may be different. The Eskimos may eat something; the Australians may eat something else. But food is food, water is water. In our system, we meditate on the abstract. Now you cannot meditate on the totally abstract, because you cannot conceive of it. Why do we meditate on the abstract? Because, God has no being, no form; I mean, I'm sorry, He has being, but no form, no name, no attributes. Now how to meditate on something? It's like saying, "Give me zero pounds." Nobody can give you zero pounds, or take zero pounds. Otherwise, you could have books of entry, "Borrowed zero pounds from Elizabeth Denley," and "Returned zero pounds to her yesterday," and "Borrowed zero pounds again today." You could fill up books with such nonsense.

So our aim in this system is to reach the Ultimate; not any lesser gods of religions. Therefore, we say, "Spirituality transcends religions." We have no quarrel with any religion. They do their part. But you know, like you come out of kindergarten school, then you go into lower school, middle school, high school, then into a college. It is no disrespect to a school that you go on to a college. Isn't it? Similarly, it is no disrespect to a religion when you move on to spirituality and spiritual practice; and that you move away from the worship of a fixed, or a materialized god into the non-material Absolute.

Therefore, following the old prescription that we become what we meditate upon; if you meditate on stone, you become stone; if you meditate on love, you become love; if you meditate on God, you become God. But the Absolute God, without any conceptual possibilities, is difficult to meditate upon. My Master said, "He is present in the heart of everybody." He must be in your heart, too. His presence sheds divine effulgence, as we call it. What he used to say, "Light without luminosity." So we sit quietly with eyes closed, in a comfortable position, trying to imagine that this divine light exists in my heart, and try to hold that thought, you see. Because meditation is not seeing, or hearing, or sensing; it is thinking continuously of one thing. So we continue to have this thought in the head, or in our mind, that there is divine illumination in my heart, for as long as it is necessary, one hour we say. This is meditation.

Now, what is cleaning? We sit in a similar posture in the evening, comfortably, and imagine that all the day's accumulations — good, bad and indifferent, it doesn't matter what — are being washed out, by His grace, from behind us, as smoke or vapour. It's a process of suggestion. And my Master used to emphasize that we have to apply the will to this process. It is like when you have a jet of air, and you want to wash out a vessel; you have to apply it in such a way that the air jet will be forced inside and will clean out the inside. If you are just playing it up here, the vessel here is not going to get clean. So we have to give a direction to this, with our will force, and positively imagine everything going out; and you will feel that you are much lighter at the end of the process.

So this process is so effective, in my experience and the experience of thousands of people elsewhere, that, as my Master used to emphasize, in one cleaning session it is possible to get rid of the accumulations of impressions of several lifetimes. So the vessel becomes purer and purer. Now in all religions you have this idea of a cleansing system. But it is purely ablutions and things like that, you know, blah, blah, pouring a little water over you and muttering something and saying you are clean. Well, if you wash your face, your intestines are not going to be cleaned. Isn't it?

That's a simple biological truth. How could it be that the spiritual truth is different?

Then, as this cleaning proceeds, the transmission begins to gain more and more potency. You see, otherwise it's like putting milk, pure milk, in a bottle which had kerosene — it will stink. You cannot even drink that milk. So, cleaning is the first pre-requisite. Transmission comes after that. No doubt we follow the system simultaneously, you know, both these things, they go side by side. Side by side, because of the efficacy of the system. Otherwise, you may have to wait for so many lifetimes to do the cleaning thoroughly and then start the transmission. Here this transmission and the cleaning adjust themselves to each other, so that we are progressively cleaner and progressively stronger. It's like climbing up — one foot here, one foot there, one foot here, one foot there; each leg supporting the weight of the body till the next leg is in place. So, as the purity proceeds, the efficacy of the transmission to elevate you becomes faster and faster. It is like that famous equation in physics, for instance, acceleration, as opposed to velocity.

Q: So this presumably has both the cleaning and the transmission in terms of spiritual elevation. But in terms of day to day life, and how it affects behaviour, and...

PR: Well, if you are a better person, you will behave better, isn't it? Now all these superficial therapeutic methods, that aim at making you a better man, by giving you a better education, by giving you a face lift, by putting you through a course on ethics — these are no use. These are all like whitewashing the house, but the basic structure is weak; it's going to fall down. Why do we find professors in big colleges who are drunkards, who can even rape somebody if they get the chance, most of whom are drug addicts? It only means education is useless, you see. Education touches only the superficial levels of existence. It doesn't make a better person of you. It can give you more intelligence. But then if you remember that the greatest crooks have been the most intelligent people.

So intelligence doesn't give you a direction to your life. It only gives you certain abilities. It's like giving a child a knife, it can cut itself better than without a knife. So intelligence in the hands of an un-spiritual person is a potent weapon of self-destruction; and this we have seen happening in our big wars, in our big criminals, in our big politicians, who have destroyed themselves and others; and very recently, in your Gulf war.

Q: In Australia, like in many other countries, there are many people searching for programs on stress management, on human elevation, on ways to improve their lifestyle, their behaviour. Is this because of a lack of spirituality in life in general, in many modern societies, or...?

PR: Well, you see, you can never remove stress. Stresses and strains are part of existence; like inflation is a part of economic growth, there must be a certain healthy inflation — seven percent, or whatever it is. Now you have this house here; it is full of stresses and strains. All that the builder achieves is in having a perfect balance, so that in no direction is this stress or the strain so big that it will pull the house down. Isn't it? This is stress management.

The Western understanding of stress management is, perhaps, to eradicate stress. But then you won't live at all, you see. How do you live? You know that if you put water in a glass, it has a certain capillary attraction towards the walls of the glass. I don't know what they call it — surface tension. Without surface tension, the water wouldn't remain there. Isn't it? Now capillary action takes the things that the roots of a plant gather and take it up to the top. You know all that. The maple tree, for instance, the sap goes up and up and up. That is why you cut it and allow it to pour out. Now, that's a fact of life. Now there must be a certain cellular tension before this can happen. Isn't it? Your heartbeat starts at the moment of your birth and goes on till you die. Is it not a tension? Is it not a stress? What do they do when you have severe heart disease where they cannot operate? They put in the pacemaker. Which only means that the pace is kept constant. You understand? So stresses and strains are not removable, and

should not be removed, but are subject to management, if you are intelligent enough to know how to manage them. So we don't believe in psychological and psychoanalytic therapy as being useful under such circumstances. They may have a certain cosmetic value, for the nonce, but not a lasting effect. A lasting effect comes only out of a change of character.

Q: The other thing too is that Australia is a country with two main cities. It is composed of people from many different nationalities, many different religious backgrounds, many different cultural backgrounds. You said before that spirituality goes past religion.

PR: Goes, not past — goes beyond.

Q: Beyond, yes. So is a method like Sahaj Marg relevant in a country where it is such a mixture of cultures and backgrounds?

PR: Well, you see, spirituality deals with human beings, without bothering about their identity, their religion, their race. We have nothing to do with these things. A human being is a human being. Like a monkey is a monkey, you know. Now do you distinguish between Christian monkeys and Hindu monkeys? So why should I distinguish between Christian humans and Hindu humans? If you are a dentist and I come to you for treatment, you won't look at my teeth and say, "Aha, Hindu teeth, how should I tackle this?" The manual for dentists is the same for all human beings. If you find a skull two million years old, you don't know what it was; whether [inaudible], or this, or that. It is a skull. And that gives you a certain anthropological basis for even studying evolution. So why don't we evolve from where we are now, without bothering about all these trivialities?

Q: So this method is available for anybody?

PR: It is available for all. No caste, no race, no sex, nothing.

Q: And in terms of costs, or anything else involved? Because, many of the meditation systems that exist in Australia, for example, at least once, they charge, sometimes exorbitant rates.

PR: You know, I am tempted to say that should we ever charge, we would charge you a million pounds more than the most expensive other systems in existence, because that is its efficacy. But precisely for that reason, we have no charge; because there can be no charge for such a system. You see, when a doctor gives you life, really, when you are in danger of death, and he pulls you out of that death and gives you life, are his fees sufficient to pay him for his service to you? It is to help him to live, so that he can help another person to be brought out of death, like that. When Jesus Christ raised Lazarus out of the dead, or from death, did he charge him a fee? When he cured the lepers, did he charge them a fee?

So strictly, the ancient law in India is, you cannot charge for these things. In fact, in India it is forbidden even to charge for teaching. In the old *gurukula* system, as we call it, where the disciples lived with the guru, the students came from different backgrounds. Some were warriors, some were brahmins, some were farmers. They brought what they could. All put it into the pot and they boiled whatever was there and all ate it. There was no question of money, you see. In Sahaj Marg there is no money involved. You are not required to pay for anything. Of course, for certain things we have to charge you; like if you want a book, you have to buy it, because we don't have here a god-man who just says abracadabra and produces a book for you. We don't believe in miracles of that sort. Because my Master said, the greatest miracle ever capable of being performed is the transformation of a bestial animal human being into a divine human being. That miracle is possible here without paying for it. But of course, they may perform miracles for which they charge, you see. Here there is no question of money at all. But for that very fact, some people don't trust us, you see. They say, how can you give so much for nothing? But you don't pay for the air that you breathe, or the water that you drink.

Q: Many people from Western cultures also don't think that they are getting anything of any value, if they don't get charged exorbitant rates.

PR: Yes, that is the unfortunate effect of the material culture, you see, that everything has to be paid for. And this is going back to the old law of the Mosaic or Hebraic, you know, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But those days are gone.

Q: The system of Sahaj Marg — is it existing in many countries outside of India?

PR: Well, yes it does. It exists in many countries. But I must also caution you against thinking that just because it is widespread, it is effective. Its effectiveness can be even if there is one man practicing it; like there's only one sun, you see, and it shines all over the world. We don't need a hundred suns for a hundred nations.

Q: But if somebody were interested in practicing this system, how would you suggest they progress? How long would they need to try a system like this to judge its efficacy?

PR: A minimum of six months — devoted practice. I used to attend a physical culture gymnasium once, and the first day I did some exercises; I felt so tired, and I was feeling my muscles. And my PT director came and said, "Wait six months until you feel the results here." [gasps with muscle pain] This, we feel instantly. [laughter] But here, it takes six months.

Q: [laughs] Yes.

14

He is in Me

Q: Master, the other day you said that spirituality was for all. But certainly in the West we have this image that if somebody follows a spiritual path, that they give up everything, they give up their family, they give up their material existence. Is this necessary?

PR: Well, the first answer I would like to say is, how many of them really have their families and their existences. To me, it is a sort of a dream, you see. People are married, but they hardly have a wife; or vice versa; you know, the woman doesn't have a husband, she has 'a man' and he has 'a woman'. There is insecurity all round, isn't it? Now, if you are really right, in that you have a family and a job and an existence, why do you feel insecure? And how does it matter, if a family you don't have, you continue not to have, after you become spiritual. [chuckles] I don't see the difference. It's only doing away with the lie, which we have been living all our lives. Isn't it?

The second thing is, of course, that in spirituality, there is only one person in your life other than yourself. You may call him God, you may call him anything you like. And then, we have a famous story I would like to say, if you have the time. The story concerning the divine *rishi* [sage], Narada. It seems Lord Narayana was going out for a walk. Narada came and said, "Lord, may I walk with you?" He said, "Yes, of course." As they were going, Narada asked the question, "Lord, what is this *maya* about which everybody is speaking?" So, Narayana said, "Don't you know? You are a *trikala gnani* — which means the knower of the past, present

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and the future. You are able to traverse all the seven worlds, and yet you don't know what is *maya*?" He said, "Lord, I don't know really, please tell me." So the Lord sat down on a stone and said, "Good; look, I am thirsty. You see that village there. Could you go and get me a cup of water to drink?" So, Narada went there and knocked on a door and a beautiful damsel came out. He fell in love with her, stayed there, married her, inherited the inn which her father owned and was leading the life of a happy innkeeper. In the course of time, they had three children; and one day it started raining, raining, raining, you know, like you have in the Christian tradition, the end of all time; and the flood was rising and they had to leave the home and run. The little child was washed away. Then the middle child was washed away. Then the eldest child was washed away; and the wife, he was holding very lovingly round her waist, she was washed away. Then he said, "Narayana, what is this misery," and then he opened his eyes and there was Narayana sitting on the stone. He said, "My son, I have been waiting for the glass of water. Where is it?" He said, "Lord, what happened to me?" He said, "This is *maya*." [laughter]

So in a sense, all this is *maya*, in that sense, you see. So the Lord is the eternal companion, with him we can go through all eternity. The rest are like passengers on a bus, on a train, on a plane. We get attached to, I mean, people sitting next to us on a plane too, "Where are you going?" "Oh, Adelaide." "Me too." "Where do you live?" "Oh, Fourth Street." "Me too." "No. 23." "For heaven's sake, I am in 26 — just down the road. And we have been living there all our lives and we haven't met." So people you have been living with all your life, but you haven't met. That's true of marriage, too. "We have been married thirty years and we don't understand each other, darling, yet."

So you see, our contention is that spirituality gives you a real understanding, which will make you even more married than you are married now. Because it is mutual misunderstanding, lack of understanding, that breaks up families, or that gives you a superficial crust of respectability. When you are spiritualized,

and your wife is spiritualized, and your children are spiritualized, then it's true inner understanding, true inner love, and then those bonds cannot be broken. So in the Sahaj Marg tradition, that is why we favour the family existence. There is no room for celibacy in this *marg* [path]. There is no need to break up families.

My Master said, "Bring the jungle into your home, not leave the home for your jungle," because, if you leave the home and go, you are always feeling guilty and sorry for what you have left behind; and sitting in the jungle, trying to meditate, you are thinking of your wife and children back home. It's better to be at home and think of the jungle, where you cannot be, and meditate as if you are there. So the family unit is preserved in a more concrete and more homogenous and, what shall we say, oneness form. So here there is no question of running away from your job or from your family. That's a misunderstanding. That's a misunderstanding arising out of the teachings of Advaita Vedanta, which, unfortunately, I think is too well known in the West, which has created this havoc that a man has to become a *sannyasi* and put on yellow robes, and go into the jungle, renouncing everything.

Here, the renunciation is an inner renunciation, not an external renunciation. You may give up your millions and still hanker after money. Isn't it? You may wear a gee-string and still lust after women. That is why we say, all sin is in the mind; all virtue is in the mind; not in the acts that are performed. So you must live like an emperor. We have the famous tradition of Janaka, who was a great emperor and he was also the greatest rishi, combination of two in one — temporally great, spiritually great. It is a very rare combination, but that is what Sahaj Marg aims at.

Q: So, can I ask you what is the purpose of this human existence?

PR: The purpose of human existence is to realize the purpose of human existence; and in that spiritual practice helps. And when we start, we understand that this is not the true existence; there is something beyond. Now, when we don't know what is this something beyond, we are afraid of death. It's like putting a child

into a train, and the mother and father don't get on to it, the child is bewildered. It starts weeping. It doesn't know where it is going; and it doesn't help to say, "You are going to Sheffield, or to Norfolk." It couldn't care less. Isn't it? So when we don't know the purpose, we become bewildered. We are bewildered because we have no direction, we have no orientation. So the first thing that happens when you pursue, or commence, a spiritual career is that you get a sense of purpose.

People run big businesses. What for? They don't know themselves. Millions and billions of dollars are amassed, and he has six yachts in the Mediterranean and two out in the Bay of Biscay, doing what? Pleasure. And you know, after some time, all this pleasures palls. How often can you go to the Greek Islands with girlfriends on board and bottles of the choicest whisky? It doesn't help. Then the time comes when you seek to drown your sorrows, your miseries, your lack of sense of purpose, everything, in drugs, in women, in alcohol. That doesn't help either; it drives you deeper and deeper into the mire. So the existence of the average human being is a purposeless existence; and that purposelessness is sought to be substituted by these false values of materialistic life. We are striving to create a sense of purpose, in having houses and cars and dogs, and things like that, you see. But we know it is all false.

Q: Well, in that case, what is the goal of human life?

PR: The goal of life, the goal of human life, is human perfection. Now, we have people who are striving for perfection in different fields. You know, like a man who wants to run a marathon in say, thirty minutes, or three hours and thirty minutes, I don't know. Or who wants to make the most money, or who wants to have the maximum number of girlfriends ever had in one's life, or own horses, you know, really a blood stable, as they call it. But these are bits and pieces of reality. It's like a man who is only doing exercise with one arm. Why? "Oh, I want to have the best right arm in existence." But what about the left arm? It's withering away.

Now, this is what happens when we have these cut up into bits and pieces existence, where each one is striving for perfection in a particular field. It's like a man with enormous biceps on the right hand, the left hand he cannot even lift. Or one arm, one leg, beautifully developed, the other leg will not bear your weight. This is what happens in our existence when we have these partially developed ambitions and achievements. So you find that it's a crippling achievement. So when you are crippled by these achievements, you find a sportsman committing suicide, you find a beautiful actress at the top of her career committing suicide, you find a billionaire committing suicide. I mean, these are pointers to this sort of existence.

So, we say there must be a balanced overall development to perfection. That is, I don't need nineteen and a half inch biceps, fifteen and a half is good enough, provided my whole body is balanced in its approach to life. The inside balanced with the external. Everything balanced inside — my muscular system, my circulatory system, my skeletal system — all in balance, what you call 'harmony' in the West. You know, what we aim at in dance, for instance, or in architecture and sculpture. What would it have been like if Michelangelo had produced a huge David with only a head and two little feet sticking out like this at the bottom. Human perfection lies in perfect balance. And that is the goal of our life.

Q: Is it also balance of the inner with the materialistic existence?

PR: Yes, I told you first, inner with the outer — that is, spiritual life should be balanced with our material life; we give up neither for the other. I mean, it's crazy to leave your home and seek spiritual perfection in the jungle, omitting everything else in life, which is what our ancient Hindus did, the rishis did; they couldn't care less. It is also the mistake that your Rockefellers and your multi-millionaires of the world are doing; all this, but not this. So my Master said, "Like a bird flies with two wings, we have the two wings of the material life and the spiritual life." If one is weak, then the bird cannot fly. Imagine a bird with one wing, beautifully developed, the other wing not. Where will it fly? It will only be

fluttering around on the ground. Isn't it? That's why we are also fluttering around on the ground.

The only difference is in terminology. You know, those who are addicted to religion, call it God realization. Those who are addicted to the human ego, they call it Self-realization. We say, it could be either. Whatever you call it, as they say in the English language, "A rose is a rose, by whatever name you may call it," isn't it? So the idea is, the culminating idea is, that in human perfection lies God realization; it's nothing other than that. The idea that you have to go on some vehicle, either a space vehicle in modern times, or on a horse like in some cultures, and go to some heaven far away and meet God sitting on a golden throne — that's all very fanciful. I don't think it mirrors reality at all.

Reality is: God is everywhere, and in your heart, too. So the easiest place to seek Him is within yourself. Like money in a bank is of no use to you, you want it in your pocket; food in the stores is of no use to you, you want it in your stomach. Isn't it? So God outside is of no use to us, He must be within us. It is this God within that we seek in spirituality. Religion teaches you to seek Him outside. Spirituality says, "Don't be stupid. If He is everywhere, He must be in you. Seek Him right there where He is, and when you have found Him, you will realize, *He is you and you are Him.*"

So this is the final culmination, you see, that you can say, "He is in me. He is the real person. This body is only His vehicle. Let me surrender it to Him. He can do a much better job of it than I can; running it around, and moving it around, and playing it around. So I hand myself over to you, my Self." That is the concluding message I have to give.

Thank you very much.

15

We Are All One

A transit is a temporary destination. And if you look at it that way, all destinations are temporary destinations. I went to South Africa; it was a temporary destination, I am not going to be there permanently. So what makes a transit a transit is that you pass through that place. It is a wrong idea to think that if I go to some place and return, that that was a destination. And if you have come to some place, and keep going in the same direction, this is a transit. So a transit is a uni-directional destination; and a destination is a bi-directional transit [chuckles], if you like to put it that way.

I know, for instance, Delhi used to be a transit point for Babuji Maharaj. Every time he came south, he passed through Delhi; every time he went abroad, he passed through Delhi. So Delhi people were very happy. They may have had him for a short time, but they had him frequently. I think it's better to have a quarter pizza every week than one pizza every one year. Pizza lovers will agree. I could infer, because we had some this morning.

Anyway, I was thinking of one thing. When Julius Caesar went to... — where was it? I don't remember — on his conquest, and it is reported he fell down on the beach; and just to hide the fact that he fell, he stood up and said, "I came, and I saw, and I conquered," something like that. But when I go, I find that he has conquered, I went, and I saw. Because it is a mystery. During Babuji's time also, I used to see the same thing. Even before Babuji arrived, the work was more or less completed; and his work was just, I suppose, to give the finishing touches.

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I remember in one meeting, I think it was the Wits University in South Africa, Johannesburg, I asked Patrick Fleury to speak first, François Deroulede translated, and it was a very good speech; then I spoke. Then later on somebody remarked that we are like the assistants of Michelangelo, they prepare the marble and do the superficial work, get it into some sort of shape, and then the Master comes, and touches here and touches there, and there is the masterpiece. Or like the master cook — he is just sitting around, while all other fellows are working like slaves, and this fellow comes along, and takes a little salt, and throws it, and that makes the difference between what the others did and what he does.

So what is the work? I really don't know. And, of course, being here seems to do something apart from whatever has to be done. Most misunderstandings are cleared when we are together. The problem with misunderstandings is that we allow them to separate us. And as time goes on, the separation lengthens, the misunderstanding deepens, hardens. That is why, I think, in spirituality they say, if you have a quarrel with your brother, before you go to sleep you should have settled that quarrel, so that you can sleep in peace. So visits are necessary only for this, that misunderstandings can be cleared, before they harden into suspicion and mistrust — that is one aspect of the work.

Of course, face-to-face contact always helps. You are able to see them; they are able to see you; mutual understanding grows. Lion tamers have said, that when they tame the lion, if they are afraid, they are in greater danger than when they approach the lion with love. We all have read the story of Androcles and the lion, when we were children. So you see, a lion is not really a lion, unless you think of it as a lion, and as a beast which will attack you and maul you. If you look at it as another form of life, suffering in a different physical plane, suffering in a different strange environment, struggling to have its food, then we have sympathy; and when sympathy develops, next stage is confidence, mutual confidence, finally it ends up with you loving each other —

so the lion loves the man, the man loves the lion, and everything is well.

So physical presence does play a great part in our spiritual work. That is why Babuji used to travel, that is why I have to travel, too. I remember Babuji was already seventy-three when we first set out on our long overseas travel, which lasted three months, in 1972. He didn't know a plane from a railway train. Literally, he didn't know what was what. He didn't know what were propellers; he didn't know what were wheels; he didn't know what was a cabin. He didn't know where to sit. He didn't know the bathroom; if he went inside, he could not lock himself, because he didn't know how to open it again. He had to learn everything. But it did not stop him from finishing his work. He needed someone with him who could tell him what to do, you see — I mean, the physical things — like how to turn on a tap.

And we also are having difficulties. Often, we go to a new place, where there is new electrical system; for instance, in most of Europe the switch is pressed upwards to put it on and downwards to put it off; and we generally have confusion for the first few days, until we get used to it. And then in Kooshalbhai's house, in the bathroom which was assigned to me, the red tap, which should be hot water, gave cold water; and the green tap gave hot water. It took me about a few minutes and a lot of water wasted, to discover this. Somebody suggested, that because people waste water, therefore deliberately some people change it. But that is foolish, because if that water does not give you hot water immediately, you are going to keep it on until it flows, and you think hot water will eventually come; so there will be more hot water wasted.

So by doing wrong things, you are going to waste more than you are likely to waste by doing the right thing. So, right work done at the right time is time utilized properly. Even the right work done at the wrong time may be of no use. This is one aspect of work philosophy, which I don't think is taught in these management institutes, that what has to be done, must be done *when* it should to be done, not at some other time. Most of our

work fails because we don't do the right thing at the right time. The time is more important than the thing itself. If the food is cooked after I am dead, what is the use? I cannot eat it any more. If a medicine is discovered after I am dead, what is the use? We have all been sorry that, say for instance, antibiotics did not exist when my grandfather died; he could have been saved, perhaps.

So we need the right thing at the right time, in the right quantity — 'dosage' as Babuji used to say. A good medicine will be poison if you take too much of it. So we have to take everything in the right — not the right dosage — application, you see, proper application, proper time. So this is how work has to be done. Gentleness, where gentleness is necessary; firmness, where firmness is necessary. And as they say in English, "You should not outstay your welcome." So too long a stay is too bad. They may forget to be sad when you leave. They may become happy. "Thank heavens! This fellow is going." It is like Gandhiji used to say, "Stop eating when you are still a little hungry." Leave a place when people are still reluctant to let you go. And I think even for dying, you should die when your relations are still reluctant for you to die. What is the use of dying when they have been waiting for fifteen years for you to die? Then they only say, "Thank heavens! This fellow has gone at last."

So we should not outstay our welcome, either at home, or at a place of visit, or in this earth, too; even in this world we should not outstay our welcome. So in this connection, I was talking of death, you see; it was a good thought, because it came accidentally — it slipped out — and I discovered that I have said something which I did not say myself; I have not read it before, I don't know if it is correct — Dr. Jajodia may perhaps confirm or deny. I said that God is everywhere, at all times. There is no time when He was not there, no place in which He is not. But, just, it seemed to me — He is at all places, but He is not at all times, because for each person it is in a different time. They cannot say a bus is at all places at all times. It is at all places, but at different times for different people. I did not explain that thought, to cover one more thought, that if we have God with us who is at all places

at all times, death cannot affect us, because death can only be at some time, although at all places, and *when God is there, death cannot be there*. It is like when light is there, darkness cannot be there. So why should we be spiritual, why should we keep God with us? The need for constant remembrance is precisely this, that death is temporary.

So you see, there are very profound possibilities which can come out of an accident during a speech. And the speaker learns more than the hearer or the listener does. I have always learnt more from my own speeches than others have learnt from these messages. If they had at least learnt as much as I have learnt, they would be better people. If they have learnt more than I learnt, which is the purpose of the talk, they would be much better off, too. So what is the use of the speaker himself learning from his own speech? It is like a cook eating his own food. But that is what generally happens. But I am grateful that at least I am benefited by what I say — in a very realistic, in a very real, and very novel way — that I learn from my Self.

I was amused to read in an old issue of the *Readers Digest*, that, "He who teaches, learns from his own teaching." And it was a very accurate thing. I think it was Senator somebody, who said it — a Roman. That is why I like to encourage people to speak. They may make mistakes, they may say the wrong things; but it is like digging a well, you bring out a lot of rubbish, after which the water comes. And this water is there in all of us, and the rubbish is there covering it in all of us. So it takes time to remove the rubbish, go deep enough to expose the water, and then drink that water. People who are intolerant of new speakers and of the wrong things that they say, are really intolerant of themselves. They are intolerant because they have not the patience to dig deep enough. They are afraid of the rocks and the rubbish; they are afraid that it is within them, and if they throw it out, they are exposing themselves. But they forget that if they don't throw out the rubbish in themselves, they cannot expose the water within themselves.

So you see, we should not be afraid of grossness, however gross it may be, however dirty it may be. As somebody said, one colleague of mine who worked — I mean it is a very vulgar thing — he said, "Everybody is sick. What is the difference between one man's sick and another man's sick? There is no difference. There may be a difference between what he eats, but what he throws out is always the same." So a saint's grossness, or a sinner's grossness, is always grossness. He cannot say, "This is less gross, more beautiful gross, more acceptable gross." It is like saying smallpox is better than cholera or diarrhoea; as many people have died of smallpox, as they have died of cholera. It is like differentiating between sicknesses and saying, "Mine is the sickness of a rich man; yours is the sickness of a poor man." Diabetes is considered to be the sickness of the rich. So, is it useful to have a rich man's disease, just to prove that you are rich? There are easier ways of proving it, you see.

So we must be tolerant of grossness. That all grossness is the same; that everybody has the same grossness, though the virtues are different. It is like well water, the rubbish that comes out of all wells is the same, when you dig. The water can be sweet, the water can be sour, the water can be hard, the water can be soft, and then you have to treat water. This is what we do in cleaning, and what we do in transmission.

So the subject, you know, finally seems to conclude by saying, that we have to develop tolerance; because when the process of digging the well is over, we ultimately find that the final result of the water, the spring inside you, is the same in all; and the grossness which was removed is the same in all. Therefore, we are no different from each other, except that there are superficial differences which should be forgotten. So this was also something that emerged in South Africa, you see.

They think they are South Africans, but they discover they are Indians. They discover they are Indians, and then they find they are Gujaratis. They find they are Gujaratis, and then they find that one is Patel, one is something else, one is a Desai,

one is... I don't know what else. And then, the Patels, one finds he's from Ahmedabad, another is from Navsari — so another difference comes. So if you want to find differences to quarrel, you can always find differences to quarrel. Two Patels from Navsari — one finds he is tall, another finds he is short; one finds he is rich, another finds he is poor. But the way of integration is to find how we are the same.

And this idea that we are the same in our grossness, and that we are same in the essence that we contain within ourselves — the divine essence — will eventually lead to the real socialism, that we are all one, there are no differences. All that we have to do is to realize this. And when we realize this, we realize *the One*, which makes us one.

Thank you.

16

Message — A Sense of Purpose

Today is an occasion for the renewal of our languishing spirit, to revive itself, to make a further spurt of effort on the road to the goal of our destiny. On this auspicious occasion of the celebration of the birth anniversary of my Master, let us resolve to re-create in ourselves a sense of purpose and a spirit of idealism, without which the goal remains but a mere mirage.

This land of ancient tradition and culture, with its history replete with the lives of saints and spiritual giants of the highest calibre, has sunk to the lowest levels of degradation and misery, because of the spirit of idealism having been killed. The goal has been lost, and traditions buried under a false and spurious culture of materialism. If anything is to save this generation, and the future generations of mankind, it is essential that the ancient traditions and the ancient glories — not merely by reciting them in poetry and music, and by writing about them in books of history, arts and culture — but by reviving them as an actual fact of our existence, by implanting them in ourselves, by becoming living testaments to that glory of culture.

My Master's purpose in descending upon this earth of humanity was precisely to set an example of a life nobly lived, according to the highest traditions of not merely an Indian or other culture, and not merely of a Vedic or other tradition, but according to the highest ideals of divine culture and tradition. When we look back to our cultural backgrounds, and to the roots of our civilization, we are nevertheless only looking backwards. When we set our sights on divinity and accept *that* as the basis of our

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civilization and culture, then we are looking forwards to a goal that is ahead of us, which must draw us by its divine attraction towards Itself. It was for this purpose that my Master lived his life on earth. If we follow his ideals and his example, our existence becomes not one of depravity and disillusionment, but one of purpose and achievement. If we don't follow his ideals, then our very existence becomes a betrayal of the purpose which we have accepted by becoming his associates.

All that is necessary is to remember the goal, which is the Master Himself; to remember to reintegrate into our lost and disillusioned selves, the glory of the cultural heritage and divine traditions that he has placed before us with such magnificence and munificence; and it is necessary to emulate him in becoming *like* Him, identical with Him. If we merely talk about them, and read about them, we may gain a momentary sense of pleasure that such a person existed among us. If we follow the ideals, and systematically and dedicatedly practice the method he has offered to us, then we can ensure that by becoming like him we shall surely ensure the continuity of his Divine presence amongst humanity on earth. This is not an endeavour of a day, or of a year, but it is a continuous endeavour for race after race of human beings, which alone can ensure the continuity of His presence here on earth amongst human beings, in an absolutely tangible and experienceable manner.

The responsibility cast upon us, and upon the succeeding generations, may appear to be a heavy one, when looked at from the point of view of human weaknesses and frailties. But if we take courage, and the trouble to develop our will power, we shall see it as a mere step from here into the eternity that is present in His presence. I pray that this may be so.

On this auspicious occasion, may He bless all of us with a strength of purpose, with a dedication for achieving the goal, and with the generosity to love all humanity.

Thank you.

17

Find the Master

In a sense, these celebrations are like recharging batteries. And now we must get on with the job of doing.

I just had a letter from a preceptor, who has been a preceptor for, I don't know, almost fifteen years perhaps, who says that a sudden discovery was made: that instead of meditating, the writer was meditating about meditation. That is, how to meditate; what to meditate upon. This is not something new, because I have said long ago that most of us sit thinking we are meditating. The difference is, when we eat, we eat; we don't sit and think about eating. When we earn money, we are earning money; we don't sit and think about earning money. But when we have to meditate, we sit and think that we are meditating, or think about meditating. And in this particular case, of this particular abhyasi, it's a good thing that this revelation came about somehow. But I believe most people don't have this revelation, and they continue with this illusion of meditation. I think most of our problems are because of this.

It is an aspect of invertendo again, that when we should do the cleaning, we meditate upon grossness. And as Babuji discovered — this was one of his really vital discoveries — that because we become what we meditate upon, when we meditate upon grossness, we become more and more gross. Babuji discovered, because he was working when he should be working, and discovered that grossness is increasing instead of decreasing. Then he discovered that people are meditating upon grossness, and are gross when they should be meditating; and the two put together is a calamitous situation for every abhyasi, really calamitous.

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So people should really wonder what is happening. I gave you the example of a train, the day before, or yesterday; that if you are at a particular station, you have seen the station board; half an hour later you look and if you still see the same station, well it is obvious that the train has not moved. I would suggest that we look into ourselves. Are we still thinking the same thoughts? Are we still doing the same things? Are we still holding on to the same prejudices? If so, if the answer is yes, then we are static. At least prejudices should change — doesn't matter, new prejudices — as Babuji Maharaj said, "We may not be able to stop making mistakes, but don't make the same mistake again and again," — because then we are stuck with one mistake — make all of them at one stroke. Get on with the job of making mistakes, so that you will soon exhaust the possibilities. But if I keep making the same mistakes again and again, we are only going round and round.

Now, today I have been having talks with many abhyasis. One abhyasi came quite concerned about the need to change, about the need to give up the past, concerned that she may have to give up what she called "deep roots" in tradition, religion. And when I asked her, "What are your deep roots," she said, "For example, the Gita." I said, "Have you read it?" She said, "A few shlokas." There are seven hundred of them in the Bhavagad Gita. By reading a few slokas she claims "deep roots" going into the hoary past of tradition. Now this is a misunderstanding. It is a fallacy, you see.

It is the same story with worship. I worship Venkateshwara, because my father worshipped, and my grandfather worshipped, and my great-grandfather worshipped. How does it become a tradition? Are you at least worshipping in the right way, in the prescribed way? Just because they did it, it doesn't become a tradition. Suppose the grandfather was a murderer and went to jail and was hanged; the great-grandfather also murdered somebody and went to jail and was hanged; and the father also murdered somebody and went to jail and was hanged by the neck. Is it a tradition that you should also murder somebody and go to jail and be hanged? "No, no! Why are you doing this?" "Tradition, sir,

ancient tradition in my family; we always murder someone, go to jail and are hanged by the neck [laughter] until we die."

So you see, we must think what is a tradition, what is a culture, what are these deep roots about which we speak? Because if the roots are really deep, the tree should not be shaken by even the biggest storm. It's a well-known fact, biologists will tell you, that deep roots mean a big tree. Bushes have very superficial roots. And if your religious faith is shaken so easily, that means there are no deep roots. So we have got into this habit of claiming tradition as an excuse when we have nothing else to offer as an excuse. "Why don't you meditate?" "No, no, sir, my tradition." "What is your tradition?" "Well my father said..." "What did he say?" "He told me his father told him, not to go out of the temple." No personal experience, no practical experience to justify this tradition, and our hold on it or its hold upon us.

So the whole thing is a chain of fantasy, a chain of fallacy, a chain of hypocrisy, handed down from father to son, to son, to son, in a very very very corrupt way. Nobody has practical experience.

You ask your father, "Well, you have been going to temples, what has it done for you?" He would generally say, "I am your father. Don't ask such foolish questions." "Yes father, but just because you are my father, how does this become a foolish question?" "Keep quiet!" "No, no, but I want an answer." "Shut up!" This is the Hindu way the family is brought up.

If you go to your teacher of religion or moral instructor in school and say, "Sir, have you seen God yourself?" "Stick to your text! What is the text for today?" "Chapter eighteen of the Bhagavad Gita, sir." "What does it say?" "Leave everything and come and fall at my feet." "You are misinterpreting it. Which is that sloka which says this?" "*Sarva dharmaan parityajya maamekam saranam vraja.*" "That was not what Krishna meant." "Sir, did you speak to Krishna yourself?" "Impertinent! Leave the class immediately." Now that boy is afraid, you see, because this fellow who is teaching him, and who doesn't know who Krishna was and

what Gita is, and has to ask the student himself which is the sloka which says, "Leave everything and come to me," my fate is in his hands. If I misbehave with him, he will fail me.

So when I go and report it to my father, my father says, "For heaven's sake, read the book; the teacher may be a fool, but keep him happy; otherwise, you are going to have to repeat this class, and next year too that fellow will be there to teach you." This is our educational system. Go to the temple, the priest is there, muttering mantras, offering prasad, lighting the *karpura* [camphor] and showing you the idol, and extolling its merits. "Have you seen God?" "You are seeing him in front of you." "But is this the God that I am supposed to see?" "If this is not the god you are supposed to see, why did you come here?" Instead of answering your question, he asks you questions.

Yesterday I was delighted to hear from a father of a young son, who's surely spiritually brilliant, that when he told the son to bow before an idol, he refused and said, "This is made of mud and clay, how can I bow before it?" A young boy, six or eight years old, more wise than the father. If you ask the father, "Why do you bow before the idol?" he says, "What shall I do? This is the only god that I have been told about, this is the only god that I have access to. Where else can I go?" "Yes, but they say there is something like Sahaj Marg. Where they say, 'Don't go to these temples,' and..." "Yes, yes, but you know, how can I give this up? The known devil is better than the unknown angel." The known devil is better than the unknown angel — this is the sort of specious, frustrating, wrong answers that we are doled out in our young age, old age, when we are dying.

I know even people who are dying say, "For heaven's sake, cremate me with proper mantras." "Why? You never believed in them." "No, no, but if there is nothing else, this may take me to heaven." This *may* take me to heaven. They never believed in heaven. They never believed in hell. They thought they had it nicely made, they are going to live forever. One fine day, you know, the hand of death beckons and they rush around. I know

people who have been cremated with the garlands and the honours of fifty, sixty temples in South India. And much is made of this, you know, "He had fifty temple honours showered upon him after he was dead." While he was there, he was showering honours upon the priests, and upon the pallbearers, and putting notices in newspapers. When he is dead, some temple honours are showered upon him. What is use of temple honours when I am dead? It is like the posthumous awards in the military. A man is killed in action and the Victoria Cross is awarded; the Queen is delighted to honour his bravery in action, by awarding him a posthumous Victoria Cross. In our case, the Param Veer Chakra. We have added a 'P' before the 'VC'.

But we don't want honours after death, we want a destination to which we can go. Where is that destination? Spirituality says, it is within you. Now, I have been witness to one thing during our Diwali festivals, you see. You know the children are holding the sparklers and rotating it, and you see a circle, circle of light. Looks very nice. People take photographs. You can also see it if you stand on top of a tall building in Europe, or a balcony, and all the cars going, they leave red trails. It is as if red lines have been drawn across by the motorcars. But these lines really don't exist; it is the car which is illuminated.

Similarly, such light as my life-trail is going to leave, the trail is only an event-trail, you know, like something being scattered behind, like an engine going and the smoke forming a trail behind it, or like a ship cutting its way through the waters of the ocean and leaving a wake behind it. The wake is no more the ship than the light is the person who would be holding the candle. And the circle goes round and round; it has a beginning and an end; and if you think over it, the beginning and the end are both there, right in that thing. It is nowhere else. Where does the circle begin? Where the sparkler is. Where does it end? Where the sparkler is. Because if it was not there, there would be no ending to the circle.

If you translate this idea into your own life-trail that you leave behind, 'event-trail' I call it, each person is the beginning

and the end of his own circle of existence. The beginning is the outer shell; the ending should be the inner self. So spirituality only says, "Don't go around in this big circle round the world, you see, leaving event-trails behind you, however glorious they may be. Go within yourself, make this very minute circle," As Babuji says, "Turn your head from here to here," and in this circle you will find the beginning is yourself, the ending is your Self. That is why when I had that experience, about which I have written in *My Master,* that I am going through a tunnel and coming out and seeing an enormous crystal ball, in which I first see Lalaji, then I see Babuji, and as I come closer and closer, I see myself.

Babuji said, "You look for God, you find your Self." But where should you look for God? You cannot misquote Babuji and say, "Babuji himself has said," this is a very common practice nowadays to say, "Babuji himself has written. Babuji himself..." as if... How could Babuji not himself say something? If he said it, he himself said it; nobody else could have said it but him. Isn't it? "Babuji himself said..." So this 'himself' business should be dropped, because we are using it to emphasize for our benefit, whenever we quote like this, or misquote like this.

So Babuji said, "When you look for God, you find your Self." When you look for God where? In temples? Nobody has found himself in temples, or his Self in temples yet. There are stories of great men, or great women, having gone into a temple and become merged with the idol of the god. With apologies to them, I asked this question of my Master, "Was it true?" He just laughed. He said, "It is not possible to merge in an idol." You can merge in idleness, but not in I-D-O-L, idol. 'Idle', ideally yes, we are all very fond of merging in it; we are generally merged in it in a state of constant remembrance. But 'idol', how can we merge with an idol? But they portray in cinemas, you know, somebody going and singing the praise of the Almighty, falling dead, and this blissful soul, some sort of non-corporeal self, just walking into the idol. And we are all awe-struck and we say, "Why not it happen to me?" It cannot happen to me, because it has not happened to that

person, too. Because anything which is possible for one person must be *ipso facto* possible for another person, given the same degree of devotion and effort — anything, there is no bar.

If a Lalaji could do it, a Babuji must be able to do it. If Babuji did not do it, well, I hesitate to say that I comment upon Lalaji's greatness and his capacity, but that is a fact. When Master had the temerity, the cheek, the guts, to say that God cannot create another one like Himself, whereas a true Master can, I assume it was a challenge through to God Almighty Himself. My Master was not a boaster. He was not a mere propagandist, saying, "I can do this, I can do that." I remember when Grace Kimball, who is no more with us in this Mission, once asked Babuji Maharaj, "What is it that you can really do to show yourself as the special personality?" He said, "I can spin the universe like a top," and she was satisfied. She never thought that the universe is already spinning like a top. I mean much faster than a top could ever be spun. You know the enormous velocities with which, at the outer reaches of the universe, the cosmic bodies are moving. If she had just thought of that, "Yes, Master, but the universe is already moving," he would have quietly smiled and said, "Well...." He cannot say, "I moved it," or "I am moving it," or "I set it in motion." That would have been contrary to his humility, to his self-abasing attitude — but the conclusion was clear.

If there is a man who says, "I can do it," if something is happening which is happening, our intelligence should put the two together and say, "My God! This is the fellow who is doing it, and I have been ignoring it all these days, all these years." But nobody thought like that. Like the boy who came and said, "How to know the special personality?" and I told him, "It is written in *Reality At Dawn*. Meditate with this idea, that it may be revealed to you." He meditated for a week, must have been very conscientious about the whole thing, because he came running one Saturday and said, "Sir, what you said, I have been doing, but only Babuji's picture is coming, again and again before me." Only Babuji's picture. He had expected some other special personality.

Now, a revelation is useless to such people. What is the revelation going to do for him. When the special personality reveals himself as promised, because his attitude was sincere, his question was necessary, and he meditated as prescribed — yet when the answer came, he said, "*Neti, neti, neti.*" [not this, not this, not this] This is Vedanta at its worst. Even when God comes, the Vedantist will say *neti*. Advaita vedantists, especially. "*Neti*, this cannot be God." Then what should be God? "No, no, if you are able to ask such a question, you are a mere human being." Form changes. "How can the form of the eternal change?" Therefore, *neti* again.

So you see, *neti, neti* is absurd. Advaita Vedanta [non-dualistic philosophy] is absurd. Then what is 'it'? Where is it of which you can say this is 'it'. Spirituality says, Babuji Maharaj has said, Lalaji Maharaj has taught, that when you find it in yourself, you can say, "*This is it*," you cannot say it of anything outside yourself; because that is perishable, that is transient, transitory, here for the nonce — here today, gone tomorrow. *This* is eternal; and when I find it is my Self, I can say, "This is it. It is within me. It is Me. I am It."

So you see, the possibility of a true revelation can only come from within. All this talk of idols coming to life and blessing people; yes, it is for ignorant masses, you see. Temple worship is for ignorant masses. Babuji Maharaj used to say, "For those who have not qualified by their samskaric existence to have the blessings of a guru, temples have been created." They have been charged with such things as they have, like when you use a torch with a dry cell when the electricity fails. When you have the electricity you don't go about flashing your flashlight, however beautiful it may be. I have some of them, superb pieces of equipment —seventy metres, the best ever made — I am very proud of it, but it cannot challenge electricity.

So similarly, temples cannot challenge the living reality of a guru. They are for the blind, for the moments of darkness when there is no guru on earth. They are for those who don't know

what is a guru, where to find a guru, how to find the guru, what to do with him when you have found him. But for one with a guru, the temple is a useless piece of thing. Let those who have access to nothing else but temples go there. Otherwise, it becomes like the boy who stays at the same class. "Which class are you?" "Sixth class," next year you ask him, "Sixth class," seventh year, "Sixth class." What are you doing seven years in the sixth class? "No, no, I worship my teacher. I cannot part from that fellow, he has taught me so much." He has taught you so much and yet you are seven years in the sixth class? "Yes, but you see, his teaching is profound. Even after seven years I haven't understood the teaching of that class." Then you can only say, like the Italian, *"Mama mia!* What is going on here?" But there are people like that. They get attached to the teacher, they get attached to the desk, perhaps to the books.

The living truth can be conveyed in many forms. It can be conveyed through books, if you have the intelligence to understand that the book is not to be worshipped, the teaching is to be worshipped, or accepted. Otherwise, like our Hindu practice of putting the Ramayana in your temple, or your *puja* room, with which every house is today adorned. You keep the Ramayana there, daily put some *akshadai* [rice grains] on top of it, put some holy water on top of it, and walk out. "What are you doing?" "Ramayana." Other people put the Gita; some people put, I think, the Bible also like that, and a cross on top of it. Why the cross? The symbol of Christ, the symbol of Christianity.

So by worshipping the book — closed, never opened — I have read that in American families they have these huge family bibles — enormous, magnificently beautiful, leather engraved bindings, hand-tooled, very expensive — they are opened only when a child is born, so that the name of the child may be inscribed on the first page; they become family heirlooms, not teachers, not containers of truth, not containers of history nobly achieved, life nobly lived, sacrifices tremendously made, courage out of all proportion to human existence — all that is given up. The book has a beautiful binding, it is hand-tooled leather, my great-grandfather bought it

in Atlanta in 1828. Seven generations of children have already been inscribed in it; it shall be kept preserved for a further seven generations. Of what use is it?

So you see, books are not to be worshipped; they are to be read, understood and the understanding translated into reality, by practicing it. *Satyam vada* [speak the truth]. *Dharmam chara* [adhere to dharma]. *Svadhyaayaan maa pramadah* [don't neglect Self-study]. Vedanta, you see — and we repeat it, and we are happy. "I have recited the couplets of the Vedanta early morning; He will surely protect." Who is this He? "No, no, sir, you don't know who He is, the god almighty Ishwara?" "Oh, I see. But are you doing what it says? *Satyam vada* means, 'Tell the truth,' are you doing it?" "These days, how is it possible, Sir?" [laughter] "We try our best, God will understand." God will understand, you see. We have an understanding god, we have a sympathetic god; but we don't seem to have an effective god, because he is failing us. He doesn't seem to pull us out of our mire of ignorance, selfishness, crass stupidity. Why? "No, no, I promised to do one thousand eight circumambulations, I have only done sixteen so far." Why? But you have made this promise six years ago." "No, no, headache, rheumatic pain, sciatica." But is god keeping count? It is intention that matters.

If you have the right intention, it is good, because right intention will lead to right practice. But when we recite the Vedas, we don't have any intention of practicing what we preach, or teach; we have the intention only to read and to be satisfied. As Babuji said, "Read and enjoy," that we are doing. Those who cannot read Sanskrit, and are too lazy to do it, ask pandits to come at home and recite it. Many others, who cannot afford this pandit's periodical visit, get a tape recording made, a cassette prepared, and play it while they are having their shave and their bath. Spirituality and shaving go on side by side. Two at a blow. The wife in the kitchen is cooking your breakfast, listening to the *kausalyaa suprajaa raama* [the first of the verses sung early in the morning to awaken the Lord from His sleep] of the temple; her object is fulfilled. But the children are saying, "Papa, please

close it. I am not able to study," "Shut up! That is the divine voice speaking, that is the Veda, learn to respect it, learn to love it." But when the child fails and says, "What can I do? You were playing that entire tape every morning." No answer.

So you see, we have to get over all these impediments on our way which we have created ourselves by claiming as tradition what is not tradition, by claiming as truth the truth which you have never known, by claiming as divine a divinity which has never spoken to you.

I was once in Srirangam and I had the opportunity to meet a quite old man, about fifteen years my senior, maybe twenty years my senior. He was a reluctant abhyasi. So I started to speak to him and he started speaking about the Gita; so I expounded from other parts of the Gita, which he was deliberately avoiding, because his point was satisfied by his quotation. Now I am also, you know, adept at quoting from the Gita. So I quoted certain other slokas. He said, "Do you know, those are meant for the *kshatriyas* [warrior caste]." I said, "Oh! When did Lord Krishna tell you that? I thought the Gita was universal in its message, for everybody. It is one of the three pillars of Hinduism. Sanatana Dharma's three pillars, of which one is the Gita." He said, "No, no, you see, the whole thing is addressed to Arjuna, and Arjuna was a warrior." Then I said, "Why do you read the Gita? What about the other parts of the Gita you have been quoting? Are they for you, or for the *kshatriya*? You are a Brahmin, Vaishnavite." No answer.

So you see, we are picking, as Babuji said, like vultures, at pieces of flesh from a dead body, just to satisfy hunger. Not knowing where to find real living nourishment. Spirituality offers you the real loving nourishment. It must be real; it must be loving. There must be no punishment behind divinity. How can the Divine punish? We are punishing ourselves sufficiently. Is it not enough that we are suffering from the samskaric burden that we are carrying through eons of time, that we should seek more? And if God is merciful, and kind, and loving, is he going to add to your burden, or try to relieve you? It is like a mother, who when

the child is suffering, knocks him on the head to add a little more to his suffering. "No, no, why did you do it?" "No, no, samskara, you know. I am furthering his *bhog*. Let him quickly finish his samskaric burden; let me beat him again." God is not like that. But you do not know this God. We cannot find Him because He cannot be found outside. We cannot touch Him; He has no form. We cannot call Him; He has no name. We cannot praise Him; He has no attributes.

Then what to do? Master says, "Find *the Master,*" who is the representative of God on earth, who comes prepared to help, as I have said so often in Europe, "With a mind and with a heart." The heart not to judge us harshly, but to study us; there is no judgement by the guru. Some people make this mistake of thinking that guru is judging my performance. There is no judgement. It is like a doctor evaluating your state of health so that he may act upon it. Similarly, the guru looks into you, not to criticize, not to judge, not to punish or reward, but to set right that which has to be set right. His work is the work of rectification. If we permit him to do that, our job is completed very quickly. How can we permit it? First by love, which opens our heart. Then by faith, which not only opens the door, but permits him to enter and do his work. Finally by surrender, where we become like the dead in the hands of the dresser.

So love alone is not enough — it must graduate into faith. Faith alone is not enough — it must graduate and culminate in surrender. Surrender alone is not enough if I am going to say daily, "Again, this morning, I have surrendered unto thee my lord; once more I shall surrender unto thee tomorrow morning," — that is no surrender. "Surrender takes place as a condition," as Babuji Maharaj said, "Where even you don't know that you have surrendered." You don't exist any more, even to think. Once you have gone, who is there to think that, "I have surrendered myself unto my Self." That can be written in poetry, and in prose, but it cannot be done. If somebody asks you, "Have you surrendered?" you will not even be able to understand the question. "What is

surrender? I don't know." "But people say you have surrendered." "No, no, I don't know." "Your Master says." "Well, he knows best."

So you see, this is the reason why we have to — not revile the past, or criticize the past, or destroy the past — but to transcend the past. Knowing that the past had a need — not a need in terms of absolute necessity, or an institution — but a need I created for myself, by my action, by my thoughts, creating for myself the need for a particular type of system of action which I adopted, but only to transcend it. It is like a house in which you build a staircase. You build each step, not to sit on one step and praise it, and to do *puja* on it, "Oh, thou art the step that shall carry me up the staircase; and in course of time, if I continue to rise upon thee, I shall one day reach the top storey," — but I am sitting there. "What are you doing?" "*Puja,* sir." "But, first step, every morning?" "Yes, but it is not complete. I have not praised it enough. Look at the enormous burden it is bearing of the other steps upon it." This is what we are doing. We make a step, only to step upon it, and to go to the next step, to step upon it, to go to the next step, to step upon it. But if I remain awed by the marble, or the gold, of the steps, carrying a sweep behind me to polish it and clean it as I ascend, I shall never make it. The steps will reach heaven, but I will remain at the lowest step.

So, let us build the institutions which will serve us. Institutions are not to be worshipped, but to be used. Let us develop a body of teaching which will ennoble us, elevate us, help us to ascend the spiritual ladder. Let us not worship books. Let us use the Master. It is no use deifying him, and worshipping him, and calling him all sorts of names, good or bad, it doesn't matter. A good name is as useless to him as a bad name is useless to him. Plus-minus, or minus-minus, what does it matter to him? You call him a dog, he says, "Yes, I bark for you when your thieves are coming; but you don't listen." "You are my priest." He says, "Yes, of course, but you don't allow me to do that function, you want to do the recitation yourself." "You are my doctor." "Yes, but you don't allow me to inject into you that which I must inject. You want a painless injection. Let me do the job in whichever capacity you

want me to do it. You want me as a servant, I come to you as a servant. But for heaven's sake, don't interfere in that service." This is cooperation. *Non-interference is co-operation.*

So, Babuji said, like somebody said yesterday, the story of the drawing room. If you go on tearing pieces of paper and throwing it just because a servant is cleaning up the mess, one day he will hand over the broom to you and say, "Do it yourself." Even vacuum cleaners fail. There is an overload factor. You must do your part in making only enough dirt to justify your existence, no more. If you do it just because somebody else is willing to give you free service, he will walk out.

So institutions, bodies of teaching, the Master himself, are there to serve us. How shall we serve them? By using the institution, by reading the books and developing thorough understanding and the ability to adopt them in our life, and the guru, by permitting him to serve us in the highest possible way for which he has come. Babuji used to say, "I can serve you in any capacity that you want. But it is not in your interest to make use of me at the lowest capacity; it is in your interest to use me at the highest capacity. One does not use a crane to pick up a needle," this example is recited by every speaker on this platform. The true import is, don't use God as your sweeper.

Thank you.

18

Transcending Pain

"These people must be crazy," that's the standard American criticism of everything they don't understand. "It's crazy." But then, when you think that they are the people who became saints, and who became divinized, there must be something to it. But we don't think like that. Many people come to Sahaj Marg because here we say we have no do's and don'ts, no idea of vice and virtue, no opposites. They say, "Well, what a wonderful system. That's for me!" But they don't understand that when we say, we don't think of these two extremes; it means both extremes don't exist for us. You should not seek for pleasure, because you cannot seek for pain. You cannot say, "Wonderful, you know, the Master doesn't judge." Perhaps not, but you have to judge yourself. The onus, the responsibility for judgement is cast upon you. Evaluate yourself.

The evening cleaning is precisely the spiritual equivalent of a rather mundane and gross confession in church. In church you are humiliating yourself, when you say, "Oh, my Lord, I did this and that." And the father says, "In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I absolve you of your sins." He has no capacity to absolve you. All that happens is a muttered confession, which makes you more ashamed of yourself. So in the spiritual context, it is put into a subtler form; no criticism of yourself, no confession, but the fact of the ability, the possibility, to eradicate it by a process — remove it.

So you see, it is the way of preserving your self-respect, such as you have for yourself, and simultaneously undertaking a

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process of bettering yourself. Cleaning is not just to get rid of garbage; cleaning is to make us lighter — lighter in the soul, lighter existence, light in this form, light in the form of lightness, you see, zero gravity perhaps. So all these things we have to achieve; without these things, there is no achievement. As Babuji said, "I can put any fool in the point of liberation." But that is a gift, you see. I am not against receiving gifts, especially from the Master. But he wants us to be mature enough to handle our problems ourselves; so that later on, we will be mature enough to handle the problems of others; so that we will be mature enough to handle the problems of the whole world, perhaps, you see. And there is no use in seeking divinization and expecting it to be a nice life, you know, fun and laughter; it doesn't exist.

So those who are looking for that sort of divinized life, where we can frolic around like the Roman gods and the Greek gods, you see, taking away women from earth, I mean the Greek mythologies are full of such abductions and rape. And you say, "What a wonderful life that must have been. By Jove! I wish I was Jove himself." Seek a Diana and seek, I don't know, nymphs and Aphrodites, all over the place; frolic in the form of deer and fawn; I mean it's an absurd mythology, you see, an indulgent mythology, a vicious mythology, full of rape and abductions. And how on earth anybody can venerate these mythologies and make gods and goddesses of them, I don't know. How on earth can we become so decadent that we worship the Greeks, and their mythologies, and their ideals of human perfection and beauty, and knowledge; when all that it was, was sensual rubbish.

It's time we recognized, you see, what real philosophy should mean; what growth oriented philosophy should help us to do and become; and not be just drawn into these parodies and fraudulent philosophies, dumped upon an unsuspecting and unwilling public — people who refuse to think, but just accept that such-and-such a person and such-and-such a thing, "It must be great." How did he become great? — the language, the beauty of language, beauty of the dialectical system, discussion — no answers, but just question after question after question after question. And

the famous dialogues stop somewhere, you know, as if you have just been suspended from a rope and the string is cut. It's okay, beautiful language; but where does it get us? Beautiful train; but if it's not going somewhere, it's no use to me, you see. It's like a big jumbo Boeing 747 standing in the hangar; it cannot move. But there is a DC10, or even a DC3, one of the most humble aircraft, which is supposed to be, even today, the safest aircraft in the air — the Dakota — if that is going, and this is not going, it's wisdom to seek that and not this. "No, no. I like jumbos." This is the Californian culture, incidentally, you see — the biggest oranges, the biggest melons, the biggest of everything; not the sweetest, not the tastiest — quality is lost for form and size.

So any culture which focuses our attention on superficialities is suspect. Who are endangered by that culture? The people within that culture. After all, when there's an air-raid warning, you run like hell out of your houses into the bomb shelters. The house may be a two and a half million dollars, but it's not safe. So you scurry underground like rats.

So the wisdom is, you see, that we must have a safe environment, an environment which protects us, nourishes us, affords us the opportunity of growth, of evolution, not something which will, you know, take us to the grave in a pleasurable way. Therefore, you see, the wisdom of accepting pain is all the more important. The ability must be cultivated *urgently*; the capacities must be developed *immediately*, if possible. Because in the ability and the willingness to bear pain is hidden the possibility of transcending pain.

19

Spirituality vis-à-vis Religion

Honoured invitees, brothers and sisters.

I have always the misfortune of coming after scholars. Sarnadji, the Secretary of the Mission — he is a scholar and an educationist, and you have just heard a brilliant speech from him talking about religion and spirituality. I would like to continue in the same trend in English, because, unfortunately, I don't have much command of other languages.

My Master says, very emphatically, "Where religion ends, spirituality begins." He has told me, so many times, that religion is the kindergarten of a spiritual life. Religion's purpose is solely to give us some idea of what divinity is, what a divine life should be, what should be the divine goal. Like we train children to play with dolls' houses, toys, little tiny vessels — how to cook, how to sew, how to feed people; these small toys that are sold especially little young girl children delight in them — empty vessels, but they have tiny spoons. These tiny hearts ladle out *daal* and *sabji* and *sambar* and *idlis* which are not existing there — it is a training for an eventual married life, when they will learn to handle life, life's realities. It is like training somebody to swim by making him lie down on the floor and repeating the arm and leg movements. But when he gets into the water the story is very different, often they can drown. The same thing happens not only in religion, but in modern curricular education, for instance in management schools. We are given histories of certain companies to study. What did the management do under certain situations? But when you get into a management job, the situation is totally different. There is

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no repetitiveness in life. Just because Henry Ford did something under a certain situation, it does not mean I can do the same thing under the same situation. In other words my Master said every moment in life is unique.

Now, one of the problems with religion is, it is static. The teachings are static, the Shastras are static, the *mantras* are static, the practice is static — such little practices which are embodied in ritualistic practices, they are all static. What is static is minerals, stones — they don't grow, they only wear away. We are familiar with this idea that in temples, idols are being worn out by the *Abhisheka* practices — milk being poured on the deity, water being poured, so many others things been poured, honey, for instance. The famous temple of Guruvayur, for instance, you see, or Palani, very much more well-known, I suppose, in the North. It is being literally worn away. So what will they do when that idol is gone? They replace it. Now, can you replace God? You can replace an idol, but you cannot replace God.

So my Master used to say these are *putlis*, play things. Training for little children in the idea of God that there is a God, giving them an idea of transcendence, giving them four hands, eight heads, twenty-seven feet, what have you, you see. And saying they are super human in their powers. You know when children are arguing, you can see this, "My father is greater than your father," says one boy. "No, no mine is greater than yours," "Oh, mine can kill a dog." "Mine can kill a cow." "Mine can kill an elephant." They go on like this, you see. Ultimately, they don't know where to end. So this idea that there are some things, certain values, certain persons or entities who are super human is all that is, I think, sought to be taught by religions. Beyond that they have no purpose.

There is another tradition: that once you visit a temple and you have surrendered to the deity, you have no business to go to the temple again. One does not surrender again and again. Military, yes. Men may surrender before their wives again and again, and vice-versa. But before God there is only one surrender.

Because my Master used to say, once you have surrendered, you don't exist any more to surrender again. Where is the person who will surrender a second time? It is like our political rededication ceremonies, "I rededicate myself to the welfare of this country and its people." Did you dedicate yourself first at all, that you are rededicating again?

So you see, this is a whole field of travesty of the truth. That is why our society is stagnant and, like the idols which are wearing away being material — stone, copper, bronze, wood — our society is also wearing down. There is a certain parallelism between the wearing down of the idols in the temples and the wearing down of human values in our society. Please think over this. It is worth thinking over. And as we are replacing the idols, that is easy, there are *sthapathis* [sculptors] galore who can carve out — why only one idol, they can make you one hundred if you order it, in gold and bronze and copper, perhaps even in glass, if you want it. But what about values, can you replace them so easily? It is values that we are losing, rituals are gaining, values are losing ground. In fact, there seems to be an inverse proportion between ritualistic practices and values of life. As one grows in strength, the other declines. That is clearly visible, because in today's society, with erosion of values, you see more and more temples coming up.

Once upon a time, there used be one temple in Madras, now today, there are probably two hundred and fifty. The Corporation has a busy job keeping the pavements clean of temples. Every fellow who wants to earn money today, puts up an idol first, puts a *hundi* [donation box] in front of it; from the collection, he builds a fence round it; from the subsequent collection, he puts a roof on it; and next year you have a wall round it — it has become a temple. A stolen idol has become a temple, yielding regular income to a fellow who has no other means of income.

I used to be fascinated with sannyasis in my youth. Most of them are filthy. Now Sarnadji has just told you that the *shuddhata* [cleanliness] must be both inside and outside. Why? Because God is *shuddh* [pure], *shuddha tattva* [ultimate purity], we say. How

many of our people, our revered religious heads, our models for emulation, shall we say, are clean even outside, forget the inside? They seem to make a virtue of filthiness, dirt. They go about with hair twenty yards long, wound up into clusters and coils on their head like enormous beehives, full of dust, ashes, as if to emphasize the biblical saying, "Dust and ashes thou art; to the dust and ashes thou shalt return." They don't even wait for returning; they are already there.

This country has the greatest number of sannyasis. If you have the patience to visit Allahabad during the time of the Ardha Kumbhamela and the Poorna Kumbhamela, they come in *lakhs* [hundreds of thousands], on donkeys, on horses, on elephants even; and each one has his own small entourage of disciples — one of whom was interested in Sahaj Marg, very strangely, because sannyasis earn a lot of money without doing anything. My Master used to say, "They have a jolly life," — *tamasha* life, you see. They pretend to renounce; they have renounced nothing. By just wearing the *geruva* [saffron] robes and putting on a turban, they are able to attract people; our superstition, our lack of knowledge of our scriptures and our Shastras, our fear of God, makes us bow before them, give them *guru dakshina* [token of gratitude].

Now, one such person managed to come to Sahaj Marg and he was practicing regularly for a couple of years. One day I met him in our headquarters in Shahjahanpur. I said, "How do you find it here?" He said, "Very difficult." [laughter] I said why? He said, "I've got to do something here." I said, "But you have been a sannyasi for eighteen years somewhere near the Himalayas, above Rishikesh, was it not difficult?" He said, "No, that was natural difficulty of cold and hunger." I said, "But you were meditating twenty-four hours a day in your *kutir* [hut]." He said, "That's what people think." [laughter] I asked him, "What were you doing?" He said, "We used to sit with eyes closed, waiting for the postman to come with a money order from our disciples from the plains." I said, "Why did you need a money order there?" He said, "You know, even food is not important at that elevation, tea is important. And

we get tea every one hour served at each *kutir* in the Himalayas." I said, "Tea every hour!" He said, "Yes, on the dot!" I said what about your meditation? He said, "I told you, it is only waiting for the postman."

So to pay for the tea, they have to earn money, which is unearned income, in the real income tax language, because they don't work for it. They have a few disciples here and there, somebody sends fifty, somebody sends five hundred, and they are waiting for their tea to be served hour on hour, twenty-four hours a day, pretending to meditate. This is not a story, this is reality. And how many sannyasis are like that? I would say most of them, barring a Vivekananda here and an Aurobindo there, and people like that, you see.

It is like intellectuals. How many people are really intellectual? Well you have an Einstein, you have a Vivekananda, you have a Dr. Radhakrishnan, perhaps. How many are the true intellectuals? Just because you read books and have a library full of books, it doesn't mean you are an intellectual. Where is your knowledge? It is said, François said, that Einstein was supposed to use twenty-five percent of his knowledge, of his brain power. That was an overstatement. The true fact is about seven percent of the brain power is used by a genius, no more. Similarly, we perhaps read one percent of the books that we have to read. We know it — personal experience — from school days we have been skipping our lessons, trying to predict what questions will come, studying those portions; if they come, we are lucky, we hit the jackpot; if they are not, I think we hit the Jill pot and go into shame and desolation.

So you see, our life is a life of hit and miss. In intellectuals, it is the same thing; in college education, it is the same thing; if you cannot predict the questions rightly we have papers leaked out. Rich people are able to buy question papers. Then we have this alarming phenomenon of an educated society where a doctor doesn't know on which side of the body is the heart, where is the liver, what is the spleen, even the intestines, the difference between

large and small intestines. We have economists who don't know economics. We have bankers who don't know banking.

There is the story of an accountant I am fond of telling, who rose up from a clerk to the chief accountant of a multinational firm, let us say. It is an old story. Every morning he used to come and open his drawer, look at a slip of paper, put it away, lock the drawer and start the day's work. His rise was so notorious he became, you know, from a clerk to, probably, the director of finance or something. But everybody's attention was on that slip of paper he was looking at every morning. One day, in the fullness of time, he passed away. The people didn't go to the cremation; they rushed for the key to open his drawer and see what was the secret of his success. They opened it, took out the slip, read it; and the words of wisdom that were written on it was: The side facing the window is the debit side. [laughter] This is how we get by in life, you see. Half a dozen mantras learnt, the man becomes a priest.

I was recently in South Africa, in an Indian place called Lenasia, just ten, fifteen days ago; and they have a beautiful temple. They have 'imported' a priest. This was the word used by the Indians there. They have imported a priest who came penniless, supposed to be a Brahmin priest, or whatever it is. In three years he owns a Datsun, or a Honda, or something. And today he is now prescribing *parihara* [remedy] for everybody; you have done this, this *praayaschitta* [atonement]; you have done that, that *parihara*; and people have become afraid of him. But they are unable to say anything because, as my Master used to emphasize, "Religion has two instruments, fear and temptation." "You do what is right. I will send you to heaven." Who will send me? My priest. "If you do wrong thou shalt go to hell." Who will send me? Again my priest. "Is there a way of redeeming my future and my destiny?" "Yes." "How?" "Fifty-five rupees." [laughter] "What will you do?" "Oh, if you are dying, I will do the *Mrityunjaya homa* [ritual performed for prolonging one's life]; if you are very sick, I will do some other *homa* [performance of ritual/sacrifice]; if your money is going, I will do a *Lakshmi puja*; if your business is unsuccessful

again a *Lakshmi puja*, if you have no children, a *Satyanarayana puja* — fifty-five — but if you can spend five hundred and fifty, it will be more effective." "Five thousand five hundred, Swamiji?" "Wonderful, it will take three days, twenty-eight *seers* [a measure] of ghee, two tons of this, four tons of that."

We are buying religion, false goods rightly labelled, in the tradition of Hindu society today, that we sell, cotton as silk, we sell kerosene as petrol, we sell omentum fat from the stomach of cows as *ghee* [clarified butter]. Poor vegetarians, Brahmins buy this ghee and are swallowing literally the omentum fats scraped out from the inner layers of the stomach, maybe a little ghee in it.

So you see to where, to what levels of degradation religion has brought us; because it is my conviction, that had religious practice been right, we could never have become such a degraded society as we are today; because religion teaches us very cheap ways. "Go to the temple. Shave your head. Be penitential. Roll on the earth twenty-five times around an idol," you know. And everything is hoity-toity again; you have nothing to worry about; God is in heaven, you are here. Your *parihara* is over. Next week you can come back for the next week's *parihara*.

Now, this is the sorry state of religion, excuse my saying it, I am a brahmin, you see, I am supposed to be the highest brahmin — others may not agree — but we Vaishnavas pride ourselves on thinking we are God's chosen people. Yet I stand before you today talking about religion, all that I have said so far. I could say much more, but I don't want to shock. But my Master said, I repeat: This is the kindergarten for children.

Get some idea of divinity; read the scriptures, find out what is the truth that they are trying, then *practice*. Otherwise it is buying a cookery book and just going on reading it: Put one teaspoon of rice into this; to one teaspoon of rice, add one teaspoon of salt and boil it; after having boiled it, put another spoon of rice into it, put another pinch of salt into it, boil it. This is what we are doing, see, mantras: *tvameva maata cha pita tvameva* [You only are the

mother and you only are the father], as Sarnadji said, "Who? Who is this *tvameva* [you only]? Who is the *tvam* [you]? And who is the *eva* [only]?" So we are reciting Sanskrit; priests are reciting it; Vedic pandits are reciting it. All that they develop, as my Babuji Maharaj, my Master said, is they develop good memory powers. Having developed good memory powers, what do they remember? How much *dakshina* I should ask from my client. Nothing more. Because when that priest is dying, he needs another priest to come and bury him, or cremate him. Remember this, you see.

A guru does not need a disciple's services. He needs the disciple's obedience; he needs the disciple's love; not for himself, but for the sake of the disciple. A priest needs the services of another priest for himself. When this fellow dies, highest Vaishnava or the lowest *mleccha* [low caste], he needs another priest to mutter over him the same torpid, crude mantras that he has been muttering over his clients during the period of his service as a priest.

There is a tradition in South India, I don't know if it is a Vedic tradition or just a mythological tradition, that priests will be reborn as dogs, because they are uttering mantras of which they don't know anything. There is another tradition, that a priest who says something, or recites a mantra, without knowing its meaning, will be reborn as a frog. [imitates the priest] says the priest, you see. [laughter] [He imitates the frog] says the frog. Very little difference, you see.

And Patanjali says, if you want to recite a mantra, do it with its meaning — *artha bhavana*; without meaning, mantra has no value, no power. My Master went several steps ahead and said, "Even with meaning, it is a limitation," because a mantra is a limitation. If you give a name to God, he is a limitation. My god is Vishnu, your god is Shiva, his god is Christ, his god is Buddha, somebody else's is the Islamic god with no name. And we all say, "There is only one God," there cannot be two gods; spiritual logic says it, ordinary logic says it. Yet we are always fighting, killing each other, "*My* god is superior to *your* god," like children saying, "My father is better than your father." So what is religion made of?

What has religion made us into? — childish, quarrelsome, selfish, avaricious adults.

This is today's society. And when one of our speakers made bold enough to say that, "Sahaj Marg is trying to re-create a society," a society need not cover the whole world, like a cancer does not have to spread over your whole body to kill it. You don't need a million lamps in this *pandal* to light it. One candle would be enough if there is total darkness. We are trying to create a nucleus of what can possibly be potentially a world society in the future, if human beings will wake up. *Uttishtatha, jaagratha, praapyavaraan nibodhata* [Awake, arise, having approached the Chosen One, realize your goal], said *ad nauseam*. Nobody worries about it, they don't even wake up on time in the morning, forget waking up spiritually, you see. Who wants to wake up on time in the morning, five o'clock? "No, sir. Why not 7:30 for meditation?" But if you have to catch a flight on business, which is going to give you a crore of rupees — four o'clock, three o'clock, two o'clock, any time. This is materialism; that for my own inner welfare I cannot do what I have to do. But to beg from somebody for a few rupees, even if it is a few crores of rupees, I am prepared to sacrifice my sleep, my family.

And our women, God help them, when the husband wants to meditate, some of these women protest. "Why meditation?" Because they are afraid that if this fellow becomes really serious, he may put on a *langoti* [loin cloth] and go away as a sannyasi. [laughter] This is the real fear of women, you see. I mean, let us face it. All this question of, "No, no, my family, et cetera," is blah, blah. They are afraid he will become a celibate, he will leave; and the moment a man becomes a celibate, his wife loses her hold on him. This is why perhaps celibacy has been prescribed. And *brahmacharya* has been wrongly understood, as Sarnadji rightly pointed out, as celibacy; *brahmacharya* has nothing to do with celibacy.

Perhaps some of you know the famous story in the Bhagavad Gita, it is said, where Krishna was camping on the banks of Yamuna

with thousands of his gopis, just a mere thousand, one-sixteenth of his full strength. They had cooked for everybody. Yamuna was in flood. Durvasa came on the other bank with a few disciples, had his bath in the river, and then from there called out to Krishna and said, "Hey! I am hungry." Lord Krishna told his gopis, "Take all this food to him," one thousand persons' food. They went to the river, but it was swollen; so they came back and said, "Lord how can we cross? The river is swollen." He said, "Say 'Krishna is a *naishtika brahmachari* [rigorous celibate], please let me pass." "*Naishtika brahmachari*" — the river opened, they passed. Durvasa and his few disciples ate up one thousand people's food.

Now the girls wanted to come back — the river had closed. They went back to Durvasa "What shall we do, Maha-muni." He smiled and said, "How did you come?" "No, Krishna said this." "Okay, you now go and tell the river, 'If Durvasa is a *nitya upavasi* [one who does not eat at all], the river may open.'" They did it, the river opened; they passed into it and came out. Now they were in a quandary, very legitimate doubts, you see; this Maha-muni and half a dozen disciples have eaten the food for one thousand people, he says he is a *nitya upavasi*. "Lord, how is this possible?" they asked Krishna.

Krishna smiles and says, "*Upavasi* means one who is near. *Upa-vasi* — he is always near me, my dear. How can he be anything other than a *nitya upavasi*? *Nitya upavasi* means permanently near me, eternally near me — he is." Now they wanted to ask the other question: this man with sixteen thousand wives, *naishtika brahmachari*? Of course, a girl cannot ask a man, "How can you say you are a *brahmachari* when you are always with me. And when you are not with me, thinking of me, seeking me." But one gopi, bolder than the rest, said, "Lord, can I ask you a question?" Now the Lord knows everything. He said, "Yes, my dear." She said, "This thing you told me to say." Krishna was all innocence, "What thing?" "No, no, that which you told us to say." "Yes, but I have forgotten" — teaser, you know, Krishna was a teaser. "No, but my Lord you said, that if you say such and such

thing..." "Yes, but what is that such and such a thing I asked you to say?" "*Naishtika brahmachari,*" you know, very, what shall I say, gently, shyly turning her cheeks away the other side, "Oh! That you are referring to. One who is going towards the Brahmam is a *brahmachari.* I am Brahmam myself. How can I be anything but a *brahmachari*?"

So you see how hollow our traditions have become. Today *upavasa* means, not eating full boiled rice; but you can break it into *rava* and eat your fill. *Phalahaaram*, once upon a time it meant *phala aahaaram*, fruit diet. But today it can be *khichdi, kheer,* so long as it is not cooked rice again. *Brahmachari* [celibate], well, we know what it means today.

So you see, religion may have had some value when it started, like everything has a value when it starts. When it ends, does it still have value? "Where religion ends, spirituality begins."

Some of us believe that the reigns of religions are coming to an end. They have had their stay, they have done, or undone, whatever they have done or undone. Now it is the field of spirituality. Spirituality means, plain and simple: *following the way of the inner spirit.* God realization? Perhaps. My Master said, "It is too big a word. Who knows what God is and how can we speak of God realization?" So we prefer to use the word *perfect human condition,* Self-realization. There is a Self, or "Divinization to the highest level," things like that, you see. When? Now.

My Master very pertinently said, "Some religions say there is an after life, some religions deny it. Now which is the truth? We don't know. We shall know only when we die. And then it is too late." Nobody wants to wait for his next year's profit when he dies; or for his PhD degree when he is dead; or for his High Court Judgeship. We want it *here and now.* Spirituality is here and now. If it is here and now, there is some way into the future, which is my future, your future; if it is not here and now, the here may never come for me, the now may not come for me. Who knows if I'll be able to say 'now' tomorrow morning?

Mrityu [death] is following us — where? If it doesn't follow us, we follow it. At the risk of offending you, or boring you, I will tell you a small story. About a great Vizier who was the prime minister of an enormous emperor in the Middle East — a Khalif. One day this prime minister went into the garden and he saw a figure, let us say Mrityu, walking in the garden. When he saw this prime minister, it put up its hands, looked surprised and then laughed. The prime minister got frightened, he ran to the Sultan, the Khalif and said, "Lord, may I borrow your fastest horse?" this was in Baghdad. He said, "Yes, but why?" He said, "No, no, I saw Death in the garden and I am frightened because he frightened me." He said, "Take any horse you want. Where are you going?" "I am going to Basra."

Now the king was curious, he was also very fond of his prime minister and he didn't like any stupid thing like Death coming and troubling him, you see. He said, "How dare he?" So he walked out into the garden; he met Death. He said, "How dare you insult my Vizier; how dare you frighten him?" He said, "Majesty, I didn't frighten him." He said, "Yes, but you did such and such a thing." He said, "Yes. I only put up my hands in surprise." "Why? Surprise, why?" He said, "Because this evening I have an appointment with him in Basra."

So, you see, if death doesn't have an appointment with us, we have an appointment with death. If the right way of living is to convert that appointment with death into an appointment with life, we must seek the life eternal. But we cannot say, "Tomorrow I shall seek that life," because tomorrow life may not be available to me to be sought; death, surely; life, never.

So we seek the eternal life. Where is the eternal life? Only in that which is supposed to be eternal. What is *that?* That which we call God, that which we call the Self, that which we call the *atman.* Therefore, seek it in the *atman.* Where is the *atman?* He is right inside you — *Anoraniyaan* [smaller than the smallest] in that form. Seek him within. Therefore we meditate, we try to establish contact with that *atman,* which is but an *amsha* [part] of

the Divine that you call the Ishwara, or whatever you may want to call it. This is the way of meditation. In the first moment of your meditation, if you are not able to establish contact, continue to meditate. Once having maintained contact, develop that contact until it becomes an association between two persons. Then give up that association by giving up yourself, which we call surrender. He takes over. Now there is life eternal, plenitude, everything.

So this is the story of spirituality, you see, *vis-a-vis* religion; and, as Sarnadji extended to you his invitation, you are welcome to try it; I hope that people will understand the true import of what religion is and what spirituality is, because too frequently people say, "Yes, yes, sir. But I am going to my temple every morning." Spirituality is *not* temple-going. Another man says, "No, no. I don't go to temples, but I do my puja at home every day." That too is not spirituality.

Spirituality has no rituals in it. It has no mantras in it. It has no formal worship in it. It has no form to worship in it, because a form given to God is a betrayal of his infinity. We betray him by putting him into a form, like a man who is put into jail and arrested, or arrested and put in jail. We are literally imprisoning such idea of God as we have, into these crude *moortis* [idols], pictures, and claiming this is Krishna, that is Radha, that is Rama. Nobody has ever seen them, at least not the present generation of human beings, nor their forefathers, up to the seventh generation. We did not exist in their time. Today's artists and *sthapatis* [sculptors] do not know the forms of those divinities. Whether they existed at all at the human level, is a moot question. Are they mere myths of value to teach us the truth and to give us an ideal to follow, or did they exist as historical personalities — is not relevant to the issue. And what form, and why? When Krishna himself says, "I come again and again, the form changes."

So a changing form cannot be an eternal form. Eternity means that which is unchanging. Eternal means that which is always; it cannot have a beginning in time; it cannot have an ending in time. It cannot grow; it cannot be a seed becoming a tree and a seed

again. It *is*. And of that *is* — the Veda speaks — *Tat tvam asi*. [Thou art That.]

So you see, the religious goal, or at least the Vedic goal, I should say, and the goal of spirituality, are not very different; but somewhere we have stumbled and given them forms, and names, and attributes, and betrayed the infinity and the ultimacy of the Divinity which we have entrapped into minor contraptions — which we call temples and mosques and churches — betraying them, therefore betraying ourselves. Please, let us wake up out of this betrayal and learn the truth, practice the truth, achieve the Truth.

Thank you.

20

Master is the Mirror

I want to correct one misapprehension about remembrance. You know, one boy asked whether you should meditate on the Master or work for the Master. I said, "Work for the Master." Some people might think what is this radical departure from the principle of constant remembrance, one more change from tradition? Et cetera, et cetera. But it's not like that. Because this is a lesson Babuji Maharaj himself gave me: that when you think of the Master, *you* think of the Master. When you work for him, he thinks of you. And that is vastly superior. What is our thought going to do? He must think of me. And then every lover wishes that the beloved would think of him or her. Otherwise, we can be sitting like dogs on the doorstep thinking of the Master for eternity, you see. It's not going to do any good. So work, work, work. Because when you work for the Master, you *are* thinking of the Master. You are thinking of His work. You are thinking how best to do it. So that is by way of clarification.

Coming to our sister, the doctor here, we should be feminine, but not feminists [laughter]. I don't say this because I am a male. I am now speaking for my sisters, as a sister myself. I consider myself to be my own sister, because I didn't have any sisters. You see, it's like when you don't have money, you try to acquire money; but when you find it from outside, you are always losing it. Like Daniel yesterday was afraid of losing the [inaudible]. But when you can create it within yourself, the wealth that you create in yourself, nobody can rob — even at midnight, even in India. So I tried to create a sister and mother, for myself, within myself.

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And eventually I found Master. And that is why, in the Hindu philosophy, we say He is everything: He is mother; He is father; He is brother; He is a friend. I couldn't go on, you know, itemizing these — paternal cousin, maternal cousin — it would be too much. But the indication is, He is everything. So when I need a sister, I look into myself, I find her there. When I need a mother, because I lost my mother at the age of five, I look inside and I find her there too.

So we should try to find everything inside, you see. And why feminists? I mean, if women are worth the salt that they eat, they shouldn't have to parade around in jeans, you know, pretending to be men. Men want women, not feminists, you see. And when they start off with this feminism, I think men start to dislike their women a little. I mean, suppose we men were supposed to start 'mennists' movements, it would be ridiculous. [laughter] It is not a joke, incidentally; it is serious. *One who is weak starts movements; one who is strong, moves.* So we want, not movements, but motion, *per se*.

So I would suggest that our women start moving. In what direction? Not in the direction of trying to get authority and equality. God never made equals. When we say that no two things in the universe are the same, not two leaves, not two fingers, not two pebbles on the shores of the oceans, there can be no equality. Equal to what? Even one woman is not the same as another woman. How can you be equal to men, for heaven's sake? And who wants it to be so? Not the men, in any case. Men don't want mannish women, they want feminine women. And a woman should want a masculine man. You don't want these effeminate fellows, going around in Italian trousers, you see. [laughter] I don't know what they call them — 'punks' sometimes, all sorts of names, I don't remember them — I don't want to. So let us have beautiful, feminine, sisters and mothers. Let us all have wonderful male masculine lives — protecting them, nourishing them, cherishing them, loving them. So that is for the feminist movement, you see.

I am all with you. I'll fight for you. But not as a feminist, because if I became a feminist, you don't have a protector left, you see. That is why the Master has to be a male, because if he were a female, he would probably only look after the women, he would be afraid to come out with the men. One reason, perhaps. And then, you know, the need for softness, more than anything — very appropriate. Because I was thinking of the relevance, you see, and when you want to make hard things, like automobiles and doors, the harder they are, the longer you keep slamming them to test them. Sometimes some of these car manufactures assure us that the door is perfect because a test model had its door slammed one million times — open, close; open, close; open, close. And it is still there — fail proof.

So the stronger we are, the more the testing that we have to undergo. It is of the nature of strength that there will always be an opposition. Somebody wants to test your strength. We cannot get away from it. So give up this idea of strength and adopt the idea, not of weakness, but of softness. Softness is not weakness. Try pushing a pin into a small ball of cotton. Even the toughest knife cannot cut through a bale of cotton — and it is cotton, you see. "You cannot slice through a cloud," as one of the old Sanskrit traditions says. And wind blows down everything. Even the strongest structures on earth can be wind-blown. And you talk of a windfall — starting with apples — but anything you get out of and beyond your use, you call it a windfall; blown down by the winds for your benefit.

So we must try to create in ourselves softness which is neither weakness nor strength, because it is not related to the concept of strength at all. Babuji was weak? Certainly not. He was never weak. Who says Babuji was weak? He was soft.

So that softness, you know, like something which almost is intangible, it cannot be felt. People, poetic minded people, they say, "When it was like a breath of fresh air, wafting our cheeks," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. It is only a hardness, incidentally, which can [inaudible] softness. So we must also remember that as long as we say that Babuji is soft, we are hard. So his softness should be

an indicator of our hardness. If he was strong, it would show my weakness, because everything is relative. And I judge from what I am, that which is in front of me. And if it is stronger than me, I say, "He is strong." If he is weaker than me, I say, "He is weak." It is always related to the self — from my standpoint I judge. So the perfect individual will not even be able to say, "Babuji was soft." Because when we are equally soft, which is going to say this is soft, or that is soft? Water cannot say that water is wet. It cannot speak of itself. It doesn't know itself. "No, no, I am wet, I am wet." How can it know?

So self-knowledge is not possible. Not only is it useless, it is not possible. But by reference to this mirror that we call the Master, you see; as long as you see him as soft, know that you are hard, and that you have to become softer yourself, until you don't see in him anything. As long as you see him as weak, you are still strong. Reduce that; get rid of it progressively, at least conceptually first, emotionally next. In reality, finally, and until you see Him, again, as nothing. You see him as handsome, you consider yourself as, perhaps, ugly, not so handsome. Get rid of this idea of beauty and ugliness, until you see in Him nothing. The day on which we shall see Nothing there, that day know that you too are Nothing. This is, in a sense, my idea of the progress of spirituality. That is why often I am tempted to get a little irritated when people start describing my Master, instead of emulating my Master.

Descriptions are useless. The sun is wonderful. It is always shining. It is splendorous. So what! What are you? And secondly this description tends to degenerate rather sorrowfully into flattery. People who knew nothing about him just mouthed the words that other people are talking. "Babuji was soft." How do you know? "Rasik-bhai said." How did he know? "Kushal-bhai said." How did Kushal-bhai know? "No, sir, you know, he got into a scrape. Babuji let him go." So 'letting go' is what we judge softness by. The more we are treated mercifully, the more we think he is merciful, he is soft, he is gentle. But if he should punish us, "Oh! He's a hard Master." If he gives us work, "He's a taskmaster." If he drives us, "He's a slavemaster."

So you see, the Master cannot demand anything. Therefore he sits quietly in his easy chair, puffing away at his hookah, being nothing, but being everything, because a multifarious rabble of humanity comes, each one thinking he is something, because they are not *that*. So the Master is everything that we are not. When we are what we should be, He is Nothing because, I am Nothing too. Emptiness cannot say of another emptiness, "That is empty!" But only something can say of something else, that is something. It is like reflection of light, you see, because Rosalind referred to physics, I think, blue appears to be blue because all the other vibrations are absorbed, leaving only one wavelength to vibrate. Similarly, when we stand before the Master, all that we are is absorbed and what we are not shines forth. It is colour, you see.

So, we see the Master's true colour, as it appears to each one of us. Someone sees him as red, someone sees him as white, someone sees him as blue, someone sees him as . . . everything. Not in the strict sense of colour, as a visual phenomenon, but as a colour to existence itself. So in this way, the Master is a mirror. People who ask me, "How is the Master a mirror?" In this way: that whereas this mirror shows you what I am, this mirror [Master] shows me what I am not. See, this is a distinction which I have not put before you before, for the simple reason that I didn't know it myself. Today it has come into my thinking, so I am putting it before you. So use this mirror to see what you are. Use that mirror to see what you are not. This mirror is useless, because you know what you are, and it is only confirming your opinion of yourself. That mirror is useful and showing you what you are not, what you have to become. Use it wisely, you see.

So this is my short, what should I say, exchange of thoughts with you today. And I hope, by Master's grace, we will all benefit from it.

Thank you.

21

Dependence on the Master

We heard a lot of speeches. My Master used to say, "We hear a lot, but we don't understand anything," which is true. Because we hear through this ear, and let out through this ear, as we say in India — out. In through here, out through here, and nothing retained here [points to the heart].

So, I was thinking of putting together — how to rope up this talk with Madeline's talk and, I don't know, somebody else, who commented on this business of hearing with the heart and speaking with the heart — also certain letters I have been getting from frustrated abhyasis, who have been frustrated by their jobs, by their husbands or wives, by their children, by their parents, environment, society, pollution, imagination, so many things, and who want to leave the Mission. You know, this poor Sahaj Marg always gets blamed for everything else. And the reason is, because we think Sahaj Marg is dispensable. "We cannot do without our husbands," so think the women. "Oh, how can I live without my wife?" thinks the husband. "What will happen if my parents don't like me?" thinks the daughter, or son. And grown up people who have children say, "Oh! My son doesn't like it, my daughter doesn't like it and, you know I want to have peace in the family." So they stop coming. Everybody stops Sahaj Marg. And it is stupid, you see. I am sorry to say it — the one thing that is going to be like a boat taking you across the ocean, and you are going to drown.

My Master used to be very annoyed sometimes, because remember that in Sahaj Marg your connection is only through the mind. I repeat, *your connection is only through the mind.*

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You say, "I have accepted the Master." It is an act of acceptance. You say you love him, you love him. But on the day you say, "I am leaving the Mission," that connection is cut. And Babuji used to say, "I can never cut it myself." Babuji used to say of himself, "I am not permitted to cut any connection, but any abhyasi can cut his or her connection by just thinking it is cut," because it is a mental contact.

Now all of you have heard Catherine [inaudible] talk about transformation of cells. Some of you will believe it. Many of you will be sceptical about it. It really sounds like science fiction. But the funny thing is, we believe science fiction. We believe, for instance, *2001 A Space Odyssey* by Clarke. Long after I read it, and about the magnetic point, or whatever they call it, on the surface of the moon which he had written about, they did discover a certain anomaly on the surface of the moon.

So is science fiction, fiction or fact, we cannot say. It is like astrology. The prediction of today is the truth of tomorrow. "Oh, it is all blah, blah..." Yes, it is very easy to say, "It is blah, blah..." because we are stupid and we stick to this moment and think that the truth of this moment is the only truth. I suffer, therefore, only suffering is the truth; I have AIDS, therefore, only AIDS is the truth; I am rich, therefore, richness is the truth. But we must understand that we have a future in the present. You should not confuse that Hinduism says, 'eternal present,' and then what is this guy talking about the future for? The future is in the present.

So you see all these stories, Babuji himself has said. If you don't believe this, you shouldn't believe Babuji; because Babuji said, "Every cell in the body has to be transformed," *is* transformed, *has to be* transformed. If it is not transformed, we are going to die the same death that we are born with. And finally, this talk tells you how important it is. You may not have the Master in the beginning, but you cannot do without Him at the end. If He is not with you at the moment of your death, *all* your sadhana of this life is a waste — all. Total. You may have meditated fifty-seven years; you may have meditated five, seven years, doesn't matter. It is then that you

want Him, because till the last moment we are making samskaras, whether we wish to or not, whether we know about it or not; and until that final samskara is taken away, liberation is impossible — even a small atom of samskara, we are back here.

So let us not have this foolish intelligence of throwing Sahaj Marg into the wastepaper basket — I mean Sahaj Marg can do without us, but can we do without Sahaj Marg? — you should ask yourself, before making such nonsensical statements that, "I am going to stop meditation. I am going to stop Sahaj Marg. I don't need a Master." You have the liberty. You have the freedom. But if you exercise this liberty and this freedom, you will have that liberty and freedom only in earthly lives repeated again and again, and nowhere else. So those of you who are tempted even to say it, say, to frighten me, for instance, should think of it many times, because it is suicidal to even have such a thought.

I hope all of you will wake up to the fact that in only Sahaj Marg you have this profound fact, profound truth, profound reality, that in the beginning you may not need the Master, you can do with a preceptor, or with his photograph, but your dependence upon Him grows more and more, until at the end of your life that dependence is *absolute*. Anybody who does not want to have it that way had better think about it twice, thrice, every day. Meditate on this problem.

That is why Babuji, to get us accustomed to this thinking, to the acceptance of this fact, says, "Create dependence upon your Master." You see, it is always obnoxious, especially to occidentals and more especially to the French, crazy as they are, that they think personal liberty is all. Sometimes I am tempted to say, "God damn that Frenchman who talked about liberty, equality and fraternity." He gave you the wrong teaching. He destroyed your nation. He made you commit murders in the name of freedom, and you are celebrating it even today. The most intellectual lot, they pride themselves on their intellect, you see. Celebrating murders galore, celebrating the guillotine. I am surprised you don't put up a model of the guillotine, and put a puppet under it and cut off its

neck every time — Bastille Day. So beware of this freedom, and this liberty.

If Babuji says, "Create dependence," it is so that I accept the fact of dependence. I feel the need for dependence. My heart feels the need for dependence. Then slowly that dependence grows. Now it is no more coming from the Master, as an infliction, that *my* need for you or my need to you, is total; but we begin to feel that need to be total. And then it is an act of acceptance with the heart. And when we allow that dependence to grow and grow and grow, until at the end it is total, it is surrender. Surrender is possible *only* by accepting this fact: that I depend upon my Master; I depend more tomorrow, than today; and each succeeding day I shall depend more and more upon Him, until at the end I depend totally on that old fellow. He may be stupid, he may be wise, it doesn't matter. He may look ugly, he may look handsome, doesn't matter. He may be lovely and soft and nice, he may be hard, doesn't matter. He is what He is. On that *'He'* we are dependent. So please learn to think over this, accept it, meditate over it, and don't, for heaven's sake, commit spiritual suicide. It is worse than material suicide.

Babuji Maharaj used to say, "A soul which cuts itself off knowingly, wantonly, deliberately, from the source of light, may have to look for it eternally." He was once talking of eternal punishment. I said, "Even God cannot condemn a soul to eternal punishment. It couldn't be possible. There exists no sin for which eternal punishment could be the punishment." He said, "When the soul can punish itself — it is possible." I condemn myself to an eternity of torment, torture, hell. Who's committing? Who's committing you to prison? Who is committing you to eternal punishment, eternal incarceration, eternal damnation in utter darkness? It is you yourself. Because I don't believe God ever punished anybody. In fact, to me that is an obnoxious philosophy which talks of punishment and reward. God is not a fool, nor is He a tout to punish us and reward us and take us by the nose. God is love. He waits for his counterpart, which must be love.

You know, like in biology, birds can mate only with birds. Intra-species mating is not possible. Similarly, only like can merge with like. So when we want to be Divine and to merge with the Divine, we have to become like the Divine. "No, no, I want to merge with Him as a human being," It is not possible. Why? Because it will be destroyed, you see. It is like putting your finger in molten iron. What will happen to it?

So we have to progressively go the way of divinization, without pause, without rest, forgetting that it is full of pain and sorrow. He who cannot face pain and sorrow is a fool. He is worse than a child. He is useless to himself. Forget society, you see. We don't think of society here. Am I useful to myself? is the only consideration. Useful, not in the proverbial or the worldly sense, of earning for myself, feeding myself, enjoying myself. No. *Am I useful to myself and allowing my Self to lead me to my destination?* It is in this sense I spoke about co-operation of the lower self with the higher Self, about which Jacky spoke to you yesterday, but he didn't explain it properly. The true co-operation is between my lower self and my higher Self. My higher Self is the Divine, the Master, you can call it anything.

So that co-operation must lead me step by step, until this co-operation itself brings the two selves closer and closer, until my lower self and my higher Self merge into one. It is no longer high, it is no longer low, it is the Self; and that is Divine, that is the Master. For this I need Him, my Master, as a model, as a goal. Because He it is who is in my heart as the Self.

So, you see, when you think rationally, without allowing your petty nuisances and your petty frustrations to divert you away from the path, you will be sensible abhyasis, your dependence growing until ultimately it culminates in an utterly total dependence, when that man has to say, "Come," you cannot even walk, "I will carry you." Dependence means His total help. Total dependence on my part, total help from Him. Partial dependence, partial assistance. No dependence, no assistance.

So I have to request all of you to be very sensible in this regard. By accident perhaps, by destiny perhaps, I prefer to think it is the latter, you have stumbled into Sahaj Marg. By no means should you allow anything to push you back out of Sahaj Marg. Because, believe me, there exists no other system on earth in which this final cleaning can emancipate you, and it is that which is important. All the cleaning here for the next thirty-five years, would be meaningless and wasteful; you might as well enjoy yourself with a bottle of champagne. If at that moment you are not there to be cleaned, and He is not there to clean you, you might as well quit now and enjoy life. Otherwise, all this is meaningless. All this suffering, this travel, sitting in dusty rooms, you know, going into dirty toilets, being cheated by dirty Indians — all this becomes meaningless. Because that final point, if you are not there, it is like my travelling through the whole of the Arabian desert to catch a train, and when I come there, the train is gone. If I have to go back all across the desert again, it means another seventy days. Here, the next train is next week. It is in this sense Babuji Maharaj said, "Once in several thousand years such a personality comes, and if you miss the bus — it is gone."

So all of you please think over this. I think this is the most important thing I have to tell you. Not to love him; he doesn't need our love. Somebody this morning said, "Master wants our love." Nonsense. He has his Master's love. What is your petty love worth? Of course, he likes to have it. But he doesn't *want it*, you see. There's a difference. It is your business to love him. He doesn't want to be loved. He has all the love in the universe coming to him from his Master and his Master's Master, and from the Ultimate Itself. What has He to do with petty human affection and petty human love? But it is like a rose a child gives in its innocence, it is very valuable, but not necessary. But the Master at the very end may not be valuable, but he is *extremely* necessary. He is totally necessary. We distinguish between necessity and value. Food is necessary, it may not be valuable. A crystal vase may be valuable, ten thousand pounds, but it cannot even give you a mouthful of milk when there is no milk.

So you see, don't make this difference, I mean this confusion, between valuable and wonderful and necessary. In Sahaj Marg, we deal with necessary things; we deal with effective systems; we deal with the real goal, as said in your prayer. The combination of these three alone can culminate in what we call your liberation, which is the smallest little goal. You don't need my proof. You have the proof of people who have been dying, and who have seen this at the last moment. There are several instances. And that is the proof. The proof of the pudding, as they say, is in the eating. The proof of a train is when I reach my destination. The proof of an airplane is when I land, not in its flying; even a bird flies. But when I fly in this plane so that I *land* at my destination; as I have said so often, one plane crashes when it is taking off, another plane crashes when it is landing. You cannot say he had a successful flight because he traversed all the way and crashed only at his destination; this fellow crashed even when he took off. Can you say it? A crash is a crash, anywhere.

So the proof of a life properly lived, wisely lived, spiritually lived, is in its death. Therefore the idea of death in Sahaj Marg is extraordinarily important. No other system deals with death like this. You get all this nonsense of people waiting with flower pots to welcome you, kissing you on both cheeks like ardent Frenchmen. All nonsense, you see. That may be a Frenchmen's idea of heaven; the true heaven is Light. It is only Light and more Light.

What is that Light? "It is Light without luminosity," as Babuji said. We don't expect to have dark glasses carried with us. "No, no, put it in your pocket before you die." This is light without luminosity. Yet is so brilliant that we cannot describe it. It is there in tangible form, because several people who have been dying have told us this, "Look at the Light, look at the brilliance," and we are left in wonder.

So may we all have that wonder — not now, not tomorrow, not day after tomorrow, but when it matters: at the moment of transition from here into the next world. Please make sure of that. I pray for it.

22

Master — The Life of my Life

One abhyasi told me this morning, "It is good that we are here for *you*, because otherwise, not understanding anything, we would have left." So we must also satisfy them, and many of our other brothers and sisters, who know English and can understand. Brother Durai said something about a disciple always speaking about the Master. Perhaps I should elaborate on the need for this — not just to speak about, but the reason for it.

I read in the Christian literature somewhere, that God made man in his own image. If that is true, we should not have any necessity to do anything about transforming ourselves. I am not saying that is not true, but if it were true, you should already be in His image, doing things like He would do, talking like Him, walking like Him, you know, as the Gita says about the *sthita prajna* [one who remains in His consciousness]. How does the *sthita prajna* walk? Arjuna asks. How does he talk, how does he sit, how does he stand? That should not be necessary. But at the same time we cannot say that statement is untrue. There must be some truth in it. So I believe that the truth lies in between our not being divine and our possessing the possibility of becoming divine. And that is in the shape of the divine essence which is in our hearts. So God made us in His image by not bothering about the form, but by putting something into us, which He hoped would some day germinate, grow and flower.

This is where human action comes as something necessary to fulfil God's purpose and to make his statement that he made man in his own image come true. This is precisely where yoga

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comes into the picture. Otherwise yoga is unnecessary, education is unnecessary, character development is unnecessary, and in fact, the human being would be unnecessary. Because it would be futile of a God to make us in his image and then expect us to live here. What for? One God is enough, we don't need a million Gods, and four million Gods, and eight million Gods.

So when God says I made man in my image, He is speaking of the future; the possibility, the latent inherent possibility, that this part of His creation would flower into a being like His, not in a form like His, because He has no form; not in qualities, because he has no qualities; not in the name of God, because God has no name, though we call ourselves Govinda, and Krishna, and Rajagopala, and all this nonsense. They are characteristics, attributes, which we sort of plaster God with. So they are also our own creation — the names of God are our creation, the attributes of God are our creation, the qualities of divinity are our creation. They are imaginative, they do not partake of that quality of reality which must be there to make something real. As I said yesterday in my Tamil talk, we give to God the attribute that we need at this moment from Him. If I need money, I think He is charitable and will give me that money. If I need to be pardoned, I think He is compassionate and merciful.

You will find in different religions, different aspects emphasized. Islam, for instance, emphasizes the compassionate aspect of God, *Al-Rehman Al-Raheem*, God the merciful; Christianity, His compassion; Hinduism is by and large silent. I mean, the true Sanatana Dharma, the science of the *Paratattva*, is by and large silent about the qualities of God, because He has no qualities. It is when we come to the *avataras* that we talk of God's greatness, His invincibility, His omnipotence, omnipresence. And yet we say Krishna was born and Krishna died; Rama was born and Rama died, and in between we have their *charitras* [stories] their glories, their moments of frustration, suspicion, bitterness. So we endow these *avataras*, at least Rama and Krishna, with absolutely human endowments, yet we speak of them as divine and we give them avatara-hood, which again perhaps is our creation.

Because you find in this scheme of the Dasavatara [ten incarnations of Vishnu], sometimes the Buddha is brought in as another *avatara*. I don't know, Mahavira may be cited as another *avatara*; one day Ambedkar may be cited as an *avatara*, Mahatma Gandhi is already finding his place somewhere in between. So Dasavatara will become fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, you see.

So that which changes cannot by any nature be divine, because the Divine is unchangeable, immutable, not locatable in space because It is not of space; not existent in time because It is not of time. He is beyond space and time, being the creator of space and time itself. And there comes our quandary, because we also say He is within His creation and He is also outside His creation.

So we have created all these difficulties for ourselves, by philosophizing about something which is not philosophy, by divinizing something without knowing what is Divine. What do we know of divinity? Unless we have experienced divinity at first hand, what right have we to speak of divinity? It is like a cow or a dog trying to speak of humanity. How can a dog say what is a human being, what are human qualities? But the human being has a certain glimpse into that total Reality, by virtue of the fact that He made us in His image, and put the *seed* of Himself into us. Therefore the human being has a very special potential, a very special possibility, that being nothing, yet he is able to glimpse in the future, something of that which he has to become. This is at the base of our craving for spiritual existence; without that there would be nothing in us; we would be animals.

So if there is something which distinguishes us from animals, it is the possession of the seed, the divine seed within us which lies latent, life after life after life, unless we takes steps, energetic steps, immediate steps, to nurture it and make it grow. This is yoga. This is yoga especially of the Sahaj Marg variety, where Babuji Maharaj, Lalaji Maharaj before him, created this system that they water the seed of life, of divine existence, with their love, you see.

Therefore, transmission is most effectively and most appropriately defined as *the transmission of the love of the Master into the heart of the disciple, heart of the abhyasi.* It is also defined, as somebody pointed out yesterday, *as utilization of the divine energy for the transformation of man.* Putting these two together, divine energy must be nothing but love. Love in its pure form, in its absolute form, in its unlimited form, untainted by selfishness, untainted by desire, untainted by possessiveness. Given freely — not with compassion, not out of an attitude of mercy or charity, because God cannot be compassionate towards His children. We must love our children, we should not be compassionate towards them; we must love our children, not be merciful towards them; we are not judges, we are fathers and mothers. "Oh, I am merciful towards my son, you see, I have pardoned him." That is not a father.

Therefore, I cannot conceive of God having either compassion, or mercy, or charity, towards us; that would be going against His divinity, making Him a mere human being with qualities of compassion and mercy and charity, treating us as beggars, as criminals. I don't think God can ever look on us like that. Therefore, this wisdom of the Sanatana Dharma, the science of the Absolute under the Sanatana Dharma, which speaks of God as having no qualities, no attributes, no mind; because if He had a mind, He would be subject to all these limitations; He would have to deal with us, not love us. Dealing with someone is not loving someone.

Therefore, we have this ancient very mystical approach to the Absolute in this country by a few, unfortunately by too few, that God is to be approached with that same love. If you love God, then there is nothing which can obstruct our path back to Him. Children love their parents, they get everything from their parents. Even if you don't love, your parents give you because they love you. That is the mercy of nature, I should say, not of God, but of something in between, which makes Him give us whether we love Him or not, which makes Him give us whether we obey

Him or not, whether you follow His rules or not. I mean talking in a more limited way, with reference to the Ten Commandments and all this nonsense.

He gives because it is *His nature to give*. He doesn't *think* and give, He doesn't *will* to give, He doesn't *want* to give, He doesn't *need* to give, but He gives, because He cannot *help giving*, because *He is the giver par excellence*. His nature is to give, like a flower sheds its fragrance on the atmosphere all round. It may be next to a gutter, to a sewer, but yet its fragrance comes. It does not say, "Near this stinking gutter, what is the use of my wasting my perfume." The Queen of the Night often grows along gutters. It does not think, because it cannot think, thank heavens; otherwise, you would have only the stink and not the perfume of these wonderful flowers that nature gives us.

The sun shines because that is its nature, not because it loves human beings and thinks, "Oh, they have to dry their clothes; their crops must ripen." It is for us to take advantage of these natural attributes of nature, that the sun must shine, will continue to shine; we don't need to pray to the sun. This *Gayathri* [Vedic mantra] business is, I don't know — you know, the creation of a mind which was not open to the absolute truth, but only to a partial truth, that we have to pray to the sun. And then when you do your *Sandhyaavandanam* [daily ritual to be performed when the day and night meet], those of you who still remember it, you know when you offer the *arghyam* [offering of water through the hands], you are doing it to remove the demonic powers which are trying to block the sun. What can blot out the sun? It is of course true that there can be a cloud which can momentarily obscure the sun from our sight; but the sun exists.

So you see, from a partial appreciation of nature, out of fear perhaps that the sun may be blotted out forever — you know, on some monsoon days, when it is very dark, you may not have the sunlight for three days, four days at a time — then they started praying. They prayed — by chance the winds blew, the clouds were dispersed, and they said, "You see my prayer is effective."

Therefore they continued to pray. Prayer is a result of hit and miss methods where some strange statistical law made the prayer seem to come out successful more than the average statistical possibility. Therefore, we pray. We have a saying in Tamil that, the crow sat on the palm tree, and a palm fruit fell. Now no crow sitting on the tree will make a fruit fall. It is an accident. It is just a juxtaposition of two non-related events; but we in our foolishness, and perhaps the crow in its arrogance, thinks, "I have made the fruit fall."

So prayer is surely a hit and miss method, in the traditional sense I am speaking, not of the Sahaj Marg way of prayer, where we don't ask for anything, where there is no demand. So all these things have to come out of a result of right understanding of the ignorance of Divinity; my ignorance of Divinity, and Divinity's own ignorance, because there is no mind. We must understand that no amount of prayer, appeal, wailing before God, or before a wall, can bring down the divine power on earth. It is not there, as far as we are concerned, in that sense of being in a position to respond to our entreaties. It is like a sleeper, in a sense; we say, "Sleeper awake," it is for that divine sleeper. In some mysterious fashion we cannot understand, It sends out a wave of Itself, and there comes a guru, you see.

Now if this guru is in contact with Him, and that Ultimate non-existent existence is in contact with this portion of Itself, which It has sent out, then we can claim that when I am with my guru, I am with my God too, you see. When I am with the guru totally, every second of my existence, then it would be right to say I am with God too, because he is with God. When your child is in your arms, and you are in a friend's house, the child is in the friend's house too, though the child does not know it. The child is only with its mother. When the mother goes, the child goes; where the mother goes, the child goes.

It is unfortunate that as we grow up we lose this dependence, because we think now we have to be self-dependent — self-dependence is the enemy of spirituality. It is all right for Western people to immediately rise up in arms and say, "No, no, then

how can you eat? Do you expect your mother to come and feed you all your life?" Well, suppose you are sick, what happens? A nurse comes and feeds you; she washes you; she clothes you. Often we feel undignified, at least the males, that here I am, a strapping fellow, and I am being man handled by a chit of a girl who is a nurse, who just turns you around like a log. So, is that not dependence? Is it self-dependence?

It is the arrogance of health, of wealth, of knowledge, which makes us think we can be self-dependent. But there is a Self-dependence, which is encouraged in Sahaj Marg, that is the Self-dependence where the Self has a capital 'S', *Self*-dependent, the Self being the Master. So you have only to change the way of writing the word self-dependence, remove the lower case for the 's' and substitute the upper case, and the battle is won. Now this dependence itself makes us want to imitate the Master, or the object of our dependence, like a daughter wants to emulate her mother, a son wants to emulate his father. We can see little children strutting around like their parents, aping their parents unconsciously until, by the age of fifteen or sixteen, very often they are spitting images as far as behaviour is concerned. That is how a businessman's son becomes a good businessman, a musician's daughter becomes a good musician.

Good, bad, indifferent, we follow in the steps of those on whom we are dependent. This being the law, this being the case, this being the behavioural truth of the existence, spirituality says, "Have your model as something worth pursuing." Not your parents — of course if your father is a god, why not? If your mother is a goddess, sure. But if they are just fathers and mothers, like billions of fathers and mothers on earth, love them, but don't emulate them. Many parents would not be happy to hear this, but when they see the results in their children, they will be more than happy that they were not the models for their children. Most parents are not fit to be models for their children. Corruption in the children grows very speedily in their childhood, in their youth, because in that age, the parents are gods and goddesses. The truth about

them is unknown, thank heavens. But misery of miseries, they come into their teens, they find their parents for what they are, and then you have this idea of the god that failed.

So you see, it is better that parents should themselves hand over the duty of being a model, one who is capable of being a model, and tell the children, "Not me, but him you should follow." Because then they will not themselves have to undergo this frustration, this sorrow, this agony of becoming fallen angels where their children are concerned. Most problems arise when the children come into their teens and find out that their parents are less than what they imagined them to be.

So a master is a very useful figure, even for parents. I follow him, you too follow him. Now, this only abhyasis can say. So, before children are permitted to be abhyasis, parents should become abhyasis. Then automatically the children follow the Master. They'll still love their parents, they see that they are abhyasis too, which is an acknowledgement of the fact that I have to change, I have to transform myself, I have to yet reach the goal myself. It is a tacit and implied truth, and the children absorb this naturally. So if they later on find some failings in their parents, they say, "Well, they are abhyasis too. They wouldn't be in this game if they were already perfect."

You see a natural twist in thinking happens, and what would have been derogatory to the parents, unseemly in their parents, shameful perhaps, the children take naturally as part of human nature. "It is in them, it is in me. They are following him and I am also following him. *Insha Allah,* they will become transformed, I will also become transformed." In this way parents can continue to have the respect and the love of their children if there is a Master to whom they can divert their children, and thus avoid the danger of falling in the eyes of their children.

It is a very useful system, you see. Therefore, in the age-old tradition of Hinduism, parents voluntarily sent their children into *gurukulavaasa* [to live with the Guru at his home]. They handed

them over to some rishi, "Take him; train him; send him back." And the children understood that this job my parents could not do. If they could do it, they would not have sent me here. Therefore they are not rishis, they are not gods and goddesses, it was my mistake to think of them as such, not their mistake that they are not that which I thought them to be. So the guilt is gone, that which could rupture relationship is gone, that which could demean somebody in that relationship is also gone.

So you see what a useful role a master serves in this sort of hegemony of socialism which you call a family life, where the Master becomes a model for all. Now if you have a model, it means you have to follow him. Follow him with the idea, with a total heart-felt idea that I must become like him. There is nothing else in yoga. You see, all this God business is nonsense. Self-realization, God realization — it is good to philosophize; from the angle of philosophy if you look at it, it is very good. But from the angle of spirituality, the sole and the only truth is, we have to become like the Master.

Now the form is fixed, you cannot change the form. A black man will remain black, a white man will remain white, a tall man will remain tall, he cannot cut off his feet, or add to it, to match the height of the Master, or his width, or his whatever it is. So in what way can you become like him? In the inner Self that he is. So you see, the need to emulate is a very very important and vital need. It is not just some fancy that I must be like him. It's not like girls who want to put on dresses like their famous cinema actresses, and look awful in the process. Draupadi saris, I saw announced somewhere, you see, in silk, cotton and mixtures. You don't become a Draupadi by wearing a sari; you don't become a king by sitting on a throne. A king sits on a throne, but everybody who sits on a throne is not a king. As they say in English, "A king must be a gentleman, but not all gentlemen are kings." But a king must be a gentleman; he cannot be a boor; he cannot be a vulgar fellow. He must set an example. His kingship depends on his being a thorough gentleman, to his fingertips, as they say.

Therefore, when we have to follow a model, we have to observe the model. Through observation we must emulate. It is very much like an artist painting a picture of a model. There she is sitting and he is looking and touching up, looking and touching up, looking and touching up, until the painting is complete. And then, if he is a good artist, the painting will be exactly like the model. Here we are to become artists working upon ourselves to transform our essence into his essence.

In Sahaj Marg the speciality is his transmission which makes this possible, almost in the first sitting. I mean, when you pour milk into an empty bucket, it doesn't become milk little by little. Everything that falls into it is milk, though the bucket may not be full. So the process is for the seed, which is already of the nature of the Master, being his seed, to achieve that fullness of growth where you can say, he and I now are one, or he must say, "You and I are one," as Lalaji said in the case of Babuji Maharaj.

It is not enough to have the seed. The seed must grow into the total possibility of that seed contained in it, in its life form. It must become manifest and it must flower, it must fruit, and create the next generation. So when we have a role model to follow, it is obligatory, it is implied, as we speak of him we try to act like him — in short, to emulate him. And we speak of him and write about him, again and again, to remind ourselves that he is the role model; I am playing the role, and I have to become like him — let me not forget this, in thinking of myself, speaking of myself, extolling myself, and emulating myself. I mean, I cannot be my own role model. What is there to be modelled in myself? Therefore, the sincere abhyasi, the sincere disciple, will speak, *ad nauseam* perhaps, of his master; write about him *ad nauseam* perhaps; emulate him, try to become like him, until one day he shall be like him. Because, as the ancient truths say: What we think about, we become; what we emulate, we become; what we follow, leads us to where we have to go.

So this is our goal. That is why we say the Master is the goal, the Master is the method, the Master is also the Mission — they

are not three things. That is why in one of my talks (perhaps in Pune), I said it is a pity, that this idea of the Master and the Mission and the method is in some way perverting the good minds of abhyasis, because I find many are getting devoted only to the Master, many only to the Mission, and many only to the method. Those who are following the method very sincerely don't worry much about the Mission, don't even worry much about the Master. They say the method is all that matters. If I do it, it must lead me somewhere. But if the method was all, can the method give us the transmission? It is the Master who has to give us the transmission, you see.

So like we have become followers of Brahma and Vishnu and Shiva, to the point where we curse each other, hate each other, no inter-marriage, as we call it. It is not inter-marriage at all. It is foolish to think of it as inter-marriage. What do you mean by inter-marriage? It is a *marriage* of two people. This business of Brahma and Mahesh and Vishnu, you know, coming down from the Ultimate — the Creator, the Destroyer and the Preserver — and we have three small religions, and they have their own sub-sects. Until today there are communities in which they cannot find boys or girls for their children to marry. I am happy, because in some way they are compelled to bring these old stupid traditions, these hypocritical traditions, these narrow minded traditions, these de-humanising traditions to an end.

I would be happy to see more inter-marriages, as we call it: brahmin marrying pariah [a member of a low caste]; pariah marrying brahmin; Muslim marrying Hindu — should be wonderful. You see, yesterday we had somebody say that his daughter went off with a Muslim, or his son went off with a Muslim, and initially he was very sorry. Why? What is the need for sorrow? One human being marrying another human being, how can it be demeaning? How can it be less than divine?

So this evil, if it creeps into the Mission, in thinking, or making us think of the Mission as a troika — you know, three things in one, Master, Mission and method, some addicted to this,

some addicted to this, and some addicted to that — we will again become foolish followers of religion, of a new religion perhaps, but it will not lead us anywhere. If at all we have to be addicted to only one, because we cannot think of three, well, then the Master is the person to be addicted to, because he is the life of my life.

Thank you.

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Be Alert, Be Receptive

Since many people want to go after lunch, we have decided to close the formal celebration now. However, programs will continue in the afternoon, there will be satsangh in the evening, dinner as usual. It is always my pleasant duty, or unpleasant, as you may consider, to bring things to a close. I have a remark before that — one ending is the beginning of another cycle. So when we end something, we should not go home with the idea that things have ended and feel sometimes sad, or melancholy about it. But we should go home with the thought that now a fresh cycle is beginning, a new and invigorating cycle is beginning, and what I have received so far is the capital I must invest in the next cycle, so that that cycle too shall be progressive and conducive to growth, spiritual growth.

So, that is how we must look at the ending of a celebration, the end of the day, the end of mortal life; because I find often there is too much thought of happiness, and sorrow, and things like that, which have no meaning. To a spiritual aspirant, joy and sorrow have no meaning, should have no meaning, because they are transitory expressions of conditions, of transitory conditions.

Often we are happy, when we don't know why we should be happy at all; and we are sad without knowing why we should be sad, whether we should be sad at all, whether it is right to be sad. I don't think there is any rightness or wrongness about these things. They are merely expressions. And if you remember that only gross things can have expressions, the subtler and subtler that we become, the less and less we have to express, until there comes

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a condition where there is no expression, nothing to express; then we will understand the need to transcend joy and sorrow. This is the lesson of the Gita.

The Gita goes further and says: Transcend also pleasure and pain, comfort and discomfort, darkness and light, et cetera, et cetera. It seems as if we are given some inhuman task, many people think it is inhuman — to ask a human being not to be human is inhuman. I recently had this problem with a very promising aspirant, whom I unfortunately made a preceptor too, and then he faced problems with his spiritual life, and accused me of making inhuman demands. It is natural when a child is growing up, to become a boy, and you make demands upon it which alone can raise it to the status or the being of a boy; and then subsequently as an adult, you can't say we are making unchildish demands and unboyish demands.

A demand is a pull of the evolutionary force. It must normally come from within ourselves, as a push from inside. Now, all that the *marga* or the method or the Mission or the guru does, is to supplement what should be your inner push with a pull from outside, so that the process is made easier. Your push and his pull both acting in the same direction means the effort is multiplied. So any demand that comes must be for our benefit.

This is the first thing we have to understand about, for instance, our ten maxims. Many people say, "I can't do it. It's not possible." Well, how do you know it is not possible until you have you tried it? It is too easy to say, "It is not possible. I am merely a human being. This cannot be done. Babuji is Babuji; a Master is a Master; God is God," et cetera, et cetera. These are weaknesses, symbols of weaknesses, manifestations of weaknesses. There is no sin in trying and failing. There is no sin at all in trying and failing. It is the trial that counts. Success and failure, according to the karma yoga of Lord Krishna, are in His hands. It is when we refuse to try that we sin, in any sphere, you see. It is like a man who stays at home because he is not willing to invest his capital because there is a risk of loss. He will never become anything. He

will be eating his capital, it is depleting day by day; and, perchance, he will end up on a day with nothing left. Then he has to try at least to beg. But beggars too are not very successful — some are very successful, some are unsuccessful — because the unsuccessful beggar is unsuccessful precisely because he does not want to try to beg; his self-respect: I was such and such a thing. How can I beg today? How can I hold out my hand? — Well, try.

So you see, it is the trial that is important. It is the doing that is important, not the succeeding, not the failing; because if you are humble enough to understand that whatever you may do, even to the peak of your capacities, it does not in any way qualify to give you that which you are seeking. Then we will understand the secret, this truth, that we are only required to try, not to succeed. I am not suggesting that we are required to try not to succeed. We are required to try. We are not required to succeed. Let me break it up into two sentences, otherwise it can be mistakenly understood. But that does not give us the right to say, "Oh, let me fail. After all he only wants me to try. Let me fail." Because then you are taking failure as your due, when that too is belonging to Him. Success and failure are both His. You have a right neither to succeed nor to fail. You have a right only to work, to do, to try.

So it is important to understand this, because many people don't come to Sahaj Marg, or to similar paths, because they say, "It is not possible. How can a human being be divinized? How can a human being have character these days? How can a human being live without telling lies in business, without bribing, without accepting bribes?" Well, try. "No, no, suppose I try and I still have to do it." Let us see. Have you tried at all? After all, you have run behind buses which have started, and managed to jump on board. You have managed to catch trains for which you had no reservation. You have managed to come to Tiruppur without ever knowing that you were coming here. And you are ascribing these, blithely, to a Master who is unaware of all these things. So why not make another trial? Why not try to be un-corrupt, un-bribe-able, un-bribing, truthful.

Now I have heard some people say, "Yes, why should I be truthful, sir? You only said we must transcend everything. Should we not transcend the truth also?" You can only transcend the truth after you have transcended the lie. To put it another way, you transcend them both, or you transcend neither. But we are always happy to transcend one and not the other. We want to transcend sickness, but not health. We want to transcend poverty, but not riches. We want to transcend ugliness, but not beauty.

'Either/or' is not the situation in Sahaj Marg — 'neither and *it*' or 'both and nothing.' On this earth of ours, in this worldly existence, we are subject to this law that we are caught between, as if two banks of a river: one is the right bank, one is the left bank. One is right and one is left. One is truth, one is a lie. One is positive, one is negative. One is gold, one is mud. In between, the river must flow. A river cannot flow without banks. Even the sea cannot be contained without shores.

So these opposites, these dualities, are things which contain existence, mortal existence. And if you must break out of this mortal existence, you have to break the banks. Here we cannot break the banks, because the river must continue to flow. I must be liberated. We are not talking here of the whole stream being liberated, a river becoming an ocean and an ocean disappearing into nothingness. Here the goal is individual, aspiration is individual, effort is individual. So it is as if, you know, the steam from the surface of the water of a river rises — it has to change its state, its condition. So water cannot remain water and un-river itself. It will always be bound by the two banks. So the secret is to let the sun play upon you, heat you up, warm you, evaporate you, so that you can become steam; and now you can merrily float away, having transcended both the banks, and your past.

So here we are not playing the game of not poverty, but riches; not ugliness, but beauty; not lies, but truth — we have to transcend both. That is why Babuji Maharaj said, "Truth is not something which God speaks." In God, there is no justice, no concept of justice. I have spoken of this before. It was a big shock to me.

How can God be unjust? Precisely because we think of justice and injustice, and we endow Him with this quality. In Him there is no justice; there is no injustice too. Because if there was justice, there must be injustice, too. So that which is nothing, can neither be just nor unjust. What happens, happens — because it has to happen, it must happen, and it will happen. So this is the only law that I know of. All the other laws, we create. Anything that happens to us, happens because we have created the circumstances for that to happen. This you call samskara.

A samskara is nothing but a certain set of circumstances embedded in us as an attracting pattern; attracting to itself either blessings or disasters, curses, illnesses, health, whatever it may be. And many people are afraid that this cleaning may eradicate the possibility of happiness, and joy, and wealth, precisely because they understand that they are joyful and rich only because of their samskaras. A saint is neither rich nor poor, because he has no samskaras. He is neither healthy nor sick, again because he has no samskara. Without samskara, you cannot be healthy. Without samskara, you cannot be sick. So this middle point of existence, neither this nor that, but something transcending both, is something we have to accept mentally, emotionally, and in our hearts, before we can really succeed in this spiritual journey, which we call Sahaj Marg *yatra*.

If there is any reservation, because I know many people have this reservation... I had long discussion, once, with a musician. And I told him all these musical prodigies, you see, who start playing the *gottuvaadyam* [long musical stringed instrument] at two years, and the mandolin at three years. A prodigy is nothing but a manifestation of the past samskaras. He must have desired to be, so much, a musician that that crystallized samskara comes into manifestation very early, and you call them a child prodigy. And there is always this possibility that with the removal of samskars, that genius — which it appears is not really genius, it is only a capacity manifested too early in life for us not to admire it and praise it — they are afraid that this may go. And that musician who was an abhyasi, left. Now he continues to be a musician and he

hopes that, like saint Thyagaraja, he will be another saint. But it is questionable whether saint Thyagaraja was ever a saint himself.

Just because you speak of Lord Rama and sing of Lord Rama all your life, are you going to be a saint? Sahaj Marg says, not necessarily. Perhaps he was a saint. Maybe so, you see. But we are only assuming, because all his *kritis* [songs] were about Rama, therefore he was a saint. He thought of nothing else except Rama, he sang of nothing else except Rama, he worshipped nothing else but Rama. Therefore Rama *bhakta* [devotee]. Being a Rama *bhakta,* he could be nothing but a liberated soul. All assumptions. Let us not assume. Let us prove in our own existence that it is possible. You try singing of Rama for three days and see whether you can change your condition; sing seven days, see if there is still some change. If not, forget it. There are several truths behind this. Rama Avatara is finished. His era is finished. Krishna Avatara has come into being. It is his Kali Yuga. If at all you must worship, you must worship Lord Krishna. This is one theory.

Whether you should worship any God at all? Sahaj Marg says no. But for those who are still inclined, try and see where it leads you. Babuji Maharaj himself tried. I think he was six or seven years old when he saw his mother praying and worshipping in the traditional style, and he also wanted to do puja and his mother said, "Do it." He did it for three days and stopped it. He said, "I found nothing." Now you may question, "Sir, is it possible to find in three days?" Well, if you are not going to find something in three days, when are you going to find it? Similarly, he tried *pranayama* and hatha yoga and dropped them; and somehow, you know, Lalaji found him. It would be wrong to say Babuji found him, because Lalaji meditated, "Who is going to be my successor?" Babuji's face appeared before him. He started transmitting, preparing that child for his future destiny. So even that comes from above.

People claim that they found Babuji and they tied themselves to him with bonds of steel, and this, and that, and the other. It is like saying that a crow planted a tree, just because it is sitting on its branch. "It is my weight which is holding down this tree." Even

the fact that we are abhyasis is by the Master's grace. That being so, why question his grace in the further steps of your evolution towards him? What should be the difficulty? If he has found you among this enormous mass of humanity in this globe and got you in his satsangh, taught you, is teaching you, continues to teach you, transmits to you, can it be for any other purpose than to take you to the highest goal, Himself? Because we don't understand this, we doubt the Master, we doubt the system, we doubt the method, we doubt the Mission, we doubt ourselves. We want personal attention as a signal of his appreciation. As somebody said if you don't look at him or her for few days, they feel desolate, desperate, some have even left the Mission for no more reason than this, that the Master did not speak to them for thirty-six hours.

So you see, how foolish our thinking processes can be? When we don't understand that we are here by his grace — he has brought us here for a purpose; that purpose is for your growth, for your evolution to the highest. That being so, all we have to do is to be here, to continue to be here. If in this we fail, he has no more possibility of helping us. He has tried his best, brought us here, given us the method, showering his love upon us, transmission. And we, for flippant less than human reasons, out of vanity for ourselves, out of the play of our own ego to stress our self-importance, we demand his attention — not knowing that he is attending to us all the time in his own way. His attention is the way of evolution [inaudible].

The attention that we seek — a pat on the back, a nice word, a smile — are foolish external symbols, which can be easily faked by anybody. Today, you can walk on the street and meet your enemy, and nicely smile at him or her, and think that your duty is done and walk on. And that fellow knows that this smile is a false smile. You smile at your debtor, because you want him to pay you money. You smile at your creditor, because you want more time to pay. You smile at your customer, because you want him to buy more. Where is the true smile, where is the real smile, where is the

smile of the soul? It is lacking today. You don't find it any more. All is sham, all is make-believe, all is fraud.

We say thank you, without meaning thank you. We say come again, hoping that they will never come again. We say stay longer, hoping that the fellow will say, "No, no. I have my reservation for today, I don't want to trouble you." "No, no, sir, why not?" Everything we say, and do, and manifest, is the opposite of what the heart wants. Some relatives, we don't want them to come even before they come. If their visit is announced, we would rather get it cancelled somehow. If perchance they should come, we put on a good face and hope they will stay not more than twenty-four hours.

You see how much of this hypocrisy is ruling our lives. And because of this hypocritical outlook that we have developed, the attitudes that we have developed, we expect the Master too to be hypocritical, and smile when there is nothing to smile about, laugh when there is nothing to laugh about, congratulate when there is nothing to congratulate you about. In short, we want to drag down the Master to our own level, instead of ourselves rising to his level.

So this is an inversion, a tragedy. If that is all you want, it is easily got. As Babuji once said in Shahjahanpur, when people kept touching his feet and he was always stumbling and falling, he said, "If you want, I will stand here and you all may touch my feet, but there will be no satsangh. By this you are not going to get anything, by that there is a possibility that you can get everything in one stroke. Which would you prefer?" Still some people foolishly smiled said "*Nahin, nahin*, this is our right, *hamara haq hai*." How it is your *haq* [right] to touch his feet? I don't know. What right have we to touch somebody else's feet? If you touch his cheek and give him a slap, he gets angry. Why should he not get angry when you touch his feet? What is this divine right that a human being has? I mean, the right must be bestowed upon you, you see.

We want rights, but not responsibilities. We want to touch his feet, but we don't want to be told to meditate. Touching his

feet, and pretending to get his blessings is easier than having to meditate and clean and do the night prayer, day after day after day. "Bore! Terribly boring process," they say. It is easier to touch your feet and pretend that it is a holy tradition, it's an arcane tradition, and it must work. A guru cannot withhold his blessings — that's what they think. But Babuji said anything can be withheld. I know that when people compelled him to extend his feet so that they may touch them, he just withdrew his energy from the feet; he suffered later, you see. But you could not get anything from him that he would not give you willingly out of love for you. You cannot compel, you cannot rob.

Babuji was saying all his life, "Loot me." But that was by way of inducement. That doesn't mean you could go and break the lock in his house and run away with his *khajaana* [treasure]. His *khajaana* was not something you could lay your hands on. His lock was not something which you could break. His door was not something you could open with your hands. It meant, "Open my heart, my young fellow, and then do it." But we didn't have the instrument to open his heart, because we don't know how to open our hearts ourselves. You know, even pickpockets have schools. They are called the light-fingered gentry, but they have schools. Even Dickens has written about such a school. It is a tradition, you see, that anything you want to do, you must be taught first how to do it. The dacoits of the Chambal Valley are taught how to do it. Bank robbers are taught how to do it. They are trained to perfection. In fact, to loot a bank requires much more perfection and more hi-tech today, than anything else — precise timing, precise technology, precisely applied.

How do you think spirituality is any less precise? How do you think that timing in Sahaj Marg is not precise? Technology is not precise? Application of that technology is not precise? And that you can get away with closing your eyes and brooding on your office, or something else; and hoping that the Master will not see that you are not meditating, but only thinking that you are meditating.

So you see, in all these things, we are pulling down the guru to our level. Because my eyes are closed and I don't see anything, he cannot also see anything when his eyes are closed. Because I can see only when my eyes are open, he too can see only when his eyes are open. Things like that. And when we want attention and this and that, and probably to have food with him, or a cup of coffee from his hand, we are selling ourselves for bits and pieces of fraud. It's easy to give you a sweet, and satisfy you, and send you home. I mean, all of you would line up here for *prasad* now. It is a shame, you see, because the real *prasad* is in the heart. The real *prasad* of the Master is what he can give from his heart; that we are receiving all the time, without being aware of it, without being conscious of it, without feeling its effects. And we run after a bit of a *halva* or bit of a *laddu* as if our whole life depended on that. And then we ask for more to take back to our families, forgetting that what is in my heart, if I took back safely home, it would bless the next seven generations of humanity.

So these are some of the things we have to understand very clearly. "Ask and it shall be given," says one great religion. Here we say, "Sit and it shall be given." "Knock and it shall be opened unto thee," says that same religion. Here we say, "Come and it will be opened for you." So you see, this is the simplest thing, that you just have to come and the door is opened automatically. It is like some of these science fiction doors, you keep moving, and the doors open before you. Which agency opens them I am not concerned so long as they open for me. Why should there be a human figure waiting to open it? "No, no, Master opened for him, why not for me?" It is the same Master who is opening it now. Sit and He cannot help giving it to you.

So you see, in Sahaj Marg, the only demand is, *"Come, sit and receive."* But we want to, "Go, stand, and give." So this is the peculiar inversion of the human mind, that we don't want things simply, in a simple way. We would like them to be complicated; we would like to climb seven hills. Edukondala Swami — there is some fascination in climbing up those steep stairs, being robbed

on the way, breaking your leg somewhere and yet reaching his temple and saying, "I am a *bhakta*, look at all the troubles I have undergone."

This is another peculiar feature of the human mind: that we wish to always feel that we have earned what we have got. Spirituality, Sahaj Marg says, you have got it because you deserved it. You can never earn it, because you don't have the capacity to earn what is given here, even one iota of it. Babuji Maharaj always said, "Spiritual work is a work of charity." Because for the last several thousand years, few people have existed, if at all, who have deserved what He has to give. So it is given out of His love for us, compassion for us, mercy for us, which you can only say is charity. Babuji Maharaj himself said, "This is charitable work that I am doing." Not the charitable institutions that we put up to give weak buttermilk, or some rotten food, and pretend that we are *dharma kartaas* [philanthropists].

But here is a man, who sits, isolated, most of the time miserable, giving, giving, giving, without anybody ever acknowledging that he is receiving. And there lies the tragedy of his existence: that you are satisfied with a glass of weak buttermilk, and you bless that man who is sitting there doling it out to you. You are blessing the man who gives you half a yard of cloth to cover your nakedness with, or ten rupees for your vote. But here what you are getting is going to last you life after life, and you are not even aware of it. So this is the tragedy of both the giver and the receiver.

So spirituality speaks of the need to be alert, to be receptive, to know what I am getting, not to know the giver — that is always impossible. God cannot be known; God can only be experienced. Can the Master be known? I never knew my Master in the real sense, but I could experience his love for us — through the transmission that he gave, through the states he awakened in us, through the conditions that he created, and most of all in the work that he gives us. Because when we give work, like for instance, making new preceptors, it shows how much trust he can put in

us who are totally untrustworthy. He does not ask us to prove our trustworthiness in advance; he says, "I trust you."

And this is an example of that ancient saying, "Trust begets trust." Those who are honest, those who are sincere, will respond to that trust by becoming trustworthy. They will become deserving, after having received; they will start loving, after being loved. So here we have that inversion of the cause and effect relationship, that the effect comes first, the cause comes later, which is a secret of Sahaj Marg, which is the secret of the invertendo principle, and which we must accept at face value, knowing that we are getting so that we can become that which we are not, which we never could be without his assistance. Knowing that we are expected to be trustworthy, because he has reposed his trust in us. Understanding that we have to love, because he has loved us. Here there is no [inaudible] first and taking from your side, from the abhyasi's side. You receive, and then if you are conscious of that, having received, of having grown, of having become, of having been blessed with the work that he is doing, there must develop this gratitude in us, in our hearts, which must make us, which must demand, which must force us, compel us, to give everything we have to him.

So that is how I look upon the spiritual growth and development, you see. And I hope that by His blessings, all of us will rise to that stature; not by an artificially fostered love, or an emotional love, and things like that, but something from the heart, which in one stroke . . . like the water comes out of a well, here everything must come out of us — love, gratitude, sympathy, willingness to work, willingness to die for him if necessary. Because love means willingness to die; and, "To die before you die," means, "Love before you live." So we must learn to love even before we live. But here we want to live and then to love; always this inversion, this invertendo.

So, brothers and sisters, I hope that by His grace all these things will be possible; that it will be possible for us to perceive some fraction of his work, to be alert to some fraction of what he is doing, to be responsive, at least minimally, to what we

are receiving, and to keep our hearts open, so that when that thing builds up in us, one day it will burst out in a grand surge of gratitude and love for him, which will be the take-off stage for us in spirituality.

Thank you.

24

Seek We Must — In the Right Way

We have heard a lot of delightful speeches, especially yesterday evening. Now once again, we have to conclude another session, which only shows that life is nothing but beginnings and endings. Every life begins and ends somewhere. Every festival begins and ends. Everything begins and ends. So what really matters is neither the beginning, nor the ending, but what is in between. And what is in between our beginning and our end, is our life. So it is this life which is valuable, not how we were born, or how we are going to die. This is one way of looking at it. Because if this life is not properly lived, whatever may have been the beginning, the ending is going to be useless. So the second wisdom that appears is whatever be the beginning, let the ending be right. And how can the ending be right, except if the living be right.

Therefore, Babuji Maharaj said, "May my beginning be like mine, and my ending like his," referring to Lalaji. So at one stroke, the importance of our past, of our heritage, of our pedigree — I mean, we are not dogs, but still — all this vanishes. "I am the son of a king." So what? Are you going to die a king, at least? We have seen many dynasties collapse. There are hardly one or two left, and they are thanks to the people; not because the dynasties are powerful, but because the people want them as some sort of a showpiece. Otherwise, they would have gone long ago. So dynasties are no use.

Similarly *gotras* [lineage]. "I am Vishwamitra *gotra*." So what? Are you going to die at least a Vishwamitra? Because Vishwamitra

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is not exactly an example of the spiritual heights to which man can rise. In those days, they thought much of *brahmarishis* [great saints]. But we don't think much of them, I mean, we don't think *very* much of them; because when you read Babuji Maharaj, he says, "Kabir was the highest evolved." None of the rishis are featuring in his literature, which is something of a scandal, you see, that people who were worshipped, who are supposed to be great, did *tapasya* [askesis] twenty thousand years, twenty-two thousand years, they don't find a mention in *our* Guinness book of records. We also have a book of records, you see; you may call it a *Who's Who*. Kabir is there, but not Vishwamitra, not Vasishta, not Yagnavalkya, none of these fellows.

So you see, the *gotra paramparaa* [continuity of the lineage] also fails in significance; it has no meaning; you may be the son of a *pariah* [member of a low caste] but you can rise to the highest. We have examples in our South Indian tradition of Nandan, for instance, who was born as a *panchama* [untouchable] and for whom it is said the Nandi [the bull of Shiva] moved, so that he could have *darshan* of the Lord. I am not very happy with that story. Why Nandi should move? God should have come out and said, "Here I am." Moving a Nandi is any fool's trick. So Nandan was good, but not very great. Great enough for the Lord to say, "Move out of my way," but not great enough to make the Lord come out to see him.

So we should not be satisfied with these histories and geographies, you see. The Christian believes in Bethlehem. The Jews believe in Jerusalem. The Muslims believe in, I don't know, Mecca and Medina. And we are now stuck with our Ram Janmabhoomi [birthplace of Rama] and Krishna Janmabhoomi, all creating problems for us, all over the world, making us fight with our own brothers, making us slaughter our own brothers, in the name of some stupid religion, foolish religion and with some crazy loyalty to the past.

I am a Hindu. You know, I don't know any true Hindu in India today. They were talking of Chinese cooking. But I am sure many

people have eaten the wrong thing, thinking it is the right thing, and being very happy about it, "It was wonderful." I remember when we were in school in Jabalpur, we all went to one scout jamboree and they had mutton *samosas* and vegetable *samosas*. And one of my Brahmin friends who was also a scout with us, somehow blundered into the wrong stall and ate mutton *samosas;* and he was praising and extolling, you see. Then one of us went and asked them, "What? Is it not the same samosa that you are putting in this stall?" They said, "No, no, this is totally different." "What is it?" "Mutton." But my friend said, "So what? It was still wonderful." So we are having this idea of, "So what? It is still wonderful." "This is whisky." "So what?"

"Can you give me a sitting which will produce this kick?" One of my friends used to ask; he is dead; he was an abhyasi for many years. But he wanted always to have the kick of half a bottle of whisky from a sitting. "Give me a sitting like that, sir." [laughter] How can you give?

I remember Babuji Maharaj's story, you know, about a man who came to him on the day of Holi and he was drunk with *bhang*, which is very popular in North India. Babuji said, "Why are you indulging in these stupid things? I will give you a sitting which will give you a much better intoxication." Babuji gave him a sitting. Next Holi he came back, he said, "Give me that sitting again." Babuji obliged. Third time when he came, Lalaji said, "Stop this nonsense." Because he is coming not for spiritual growth but for intoxication.

So many people come to spirituality for many reasons. Some to eat mutton, and pretend that it is vegetable. Some eat vegetable, and still get the taste of mutton. Like you have nowadays, soya cake and what not, which, if you bite it, it is very much like meat. So you see, we are always living in a world of illusion. I want something which will look like something else, taste like something else. You buy *badam halva* today, it is made of groundnuts and a little essence. You pay a lot of money. Because you pay a lot

of money, you say, "This *is* real *badam halva*. I know." How do you know? So we justify our foolishness, we justify our ignorance, because we paid a high price for that ignorance. So my ignorance is very valuable, because I paid a high price. Your ignorance is stupid, because you paid a lower price for it.

So you see, money has entered into everything today. Somebody buys a house for six lakhs [six hundred thousand], he is a good man. If you buy the same house just one hundred yards away for three lakhs, even your wife will be unhappy. "No, no, there must be something wrong." You know. "Why do you say that?" "No, no, he paid six lakhs, living just twenty yards away, how could you possibly get this for three lakhs? Construction is bad, bricks are not baked properly, cement may be Kota or Priya for all we know." So we test things with the price we pay, rather than by what we have received.

This is the problem with the people who come to spirituality. Yesterday somebody was talking, you know — "How much should I give for a sitting?" Today, if you make them pay, they will appreciate the system and its effectiveness. They won't feel anything, but then they say, "No, no, a thousand rupees for a sitting, how can it be bad?" Then, if you put up the price to two thousand, they will feel it is even better; and then if we say one lakh of rupees for an individual sitting, all the millionaire mill owners would be here. Because today, nobody wants to work for salvation, they want to buy salvation. This is the secret of temple worship — any form of temple, any religion, you see. We want to get away with paying a price for it and deluding ourselves into thinking that, "Now I am finding favour in the eyes of my god," and we don't want to work for it.

And when you say, "This is a simple system," they say, "Yes, but I still have to work for it." It cannot be more simple. "Yes, but still I have to work for it." Only one hour, "Yes, but I still have to work for it." So you see, as long as we are simple and free there is this problem, as Mr. Durai rightly said yesterday: "It is a problem

of Sahaj Marg. That it is too cheap and too simple." But we cannot make it expensive, because it has no price. What price can you put for a priceless thing? Priceless means, it has no price. It is for those who have the temerity, the cheek, the courage, the craving, to go and grab it. After all, we have read of blind people, lame people, walking over seven mountains, and going through seven dungeons, to get the hand of a princess somewhere. And she didn't say, "You are deaf, dumb, and blind, and what not" — she went, because they had exhibited their need, you see.

All these old stories, fables of dungeons, of *mantravaadis* [magicians], of dragons to be met, finally to win a prize, are only showing that you have to do something to get something which is there. When we translate that 'there' into 'here' it appears even more stupid. They say, "Yes, but if it is already there, why should I do anything? What is the need?" It is like telling a man — you wake him up and say, "Baba, you have a million rupees in your pocket." He says, "Wonderful! Now I don't have to work at all!" He has been lying under a banyan tree for six years — nobody to look after, somebody looking after him, some village maid giving him some rice. Suddenly he finds he's a millionaire, he is happier because now he need not work at all.

So you see, this idea that God is within is the second obstacle. That is why people who are religious don't accept. They say, "Well, I have to go to Kashi, *tirtha yatra* [pilgrimage]. I have to go to Badrinath. I have to go Rameshwaram. Without going to these places, how can I get God?" If you repeat that he is in your heart, he says, "You fellows are crazy. If he is in your heart, why do you sit down with closed eyes? Why do *you* meditate?" And often our preceptors find it difficult to answer these questions. They themselves become puzzled, and some of them perhaps leave Sahaj Marg too, I don't know. They say, "The whole thing is crazy, let me go to Rameshwaram."

So these are the sorts of pitfalls that we have when we try to understand the system. But then, if you think what made this

fellow cross seven oceans and seven mountains and go through seven dungeons for a prize that he did not know what it really is, except that they call it *amrit* [nectar], that is faith in a goal which you don't know about. It is coupled — that faith and something we don't know about, but which we crave — is coupled with this craving for something which I don't have.

You see, a need is always something for a thing I don't have, coupled with the possibility of having it from somewhere. Now here, there is this juxtaposition, very peculiar, that in me I have a need for something which I don't have, not knowing that I have it within me. It is like sometimes I search for my glasses when I am wearing them. I am looking everywhere and I don't find it, then suddenly it strikes me, "How am I able to see?" and the glasses are here. And then I curse myself for a damn fool, you see. But I am happy that I have the glasses.

What will you have when you find this God within you or your Self within you, is the similar state that, "Thank heavens, He is there." There is not going to be any ecstasy, there is not going to be any new vision. Because my glasses are there, I have been seeing, and I am not going to see any better; but knowing that my glasses are on my face, I continue to see precisely what I have seen, but now I am happy, happier than before when I thought my glasses were not there.

Therefore, realization is not a state in which you will find happiness, or ecstasy, or some new-found powers, divinity, et cetera, et cetera. It is a state of contentment that all is well with me. Therefore, when Babuji achieved the final stage, and Lalaji Maharaj congratulated him, and said "Congratulations! Today you have become just like me." And Babuji said, "Yes, but is this all?" Lalaji said, "If that is all you think about it, let me withdraw this condition from you." Babuji fell at his feet and said, "Please don't. Because if you do it, I shall die." Precisely like my glasses, you know; if somebody says, "This is all?" and he says, "Well, let me take away your glasses," I would say, "For heaven's sake don't. I won't be able to see."

Therefore, we have that which we are seeking. But seek we must, because we don't know we have it; and when we look for it in the right way, we find we have it, and we achieve a state of contentment which cannot be compared with anything else. The Christians call it peace that surpasseth understanding. For me it is just a state of, 'Okay, all is well.' So I pray that all may be similarly 'well' with all of you — today, if possible; as early as possible, if not today.

Thank you.

25

Leadership — Essential for Growth

If I say that the growth here has been excruciatingly slow — it started twice, this centre, and stopped twice. I mean it ceased to exist altogether. I remember the first time Babuji Maharaj himself came here, and we were staying in the house of one Mr. Mouli. His two sons were my friends and one of them I think, was then married to one of our managers in Virudhunagar. So using that opportunity, Babuji Maharaj came here, and I think probably we had six or seven abhyasis then, and nothing much came of that, the whole thing collapsed. Then, I don't know, for some years, there was nothing here except when I used to come; I used to see one or two people and they said, "Yes, yes, we are doing something."

And today we are still quite behind centres which were developed much later. Even in South India, for instance, we have the Tiruppur centre. I know comparisons are not good, but then comparisons must be used to give us an impetus in the right direction. Not to criticize, but to create a momentum that if they can grow, we should also be able to grow. Unfortunately, in Tamilnadu, especially Coimbatore, and more especially Trichy centres, have been quite disappointing in their growth. Trichy is perhaps even worse. The same twenty-five to thirty abhyasis, the same internal politics, the same promises, the same speeches *ad nauseam*. I don't know why, but it is so.

So now we have to take steps, you see. It is not that growth is a sign of prosperity, but the message of the Master, his services to humanity, must be made available. Even a small place like Kangayam, you see, where we started with three abhyasis all from

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one family — yesterday I had the pleasure of going there to see a plot of land for the Mission's ashram. A tiny village, Kangayam is a village. So we should see why these people are growing, why we are not growing here. And I think I should only blame, I mean, I am sorry, I won't use the word 'blame', but ascribe the reason to leadership — lack of leadership.

In this country we have leaders, but no leadership. This is one of the tragedies of India that we have leaders in all fields, political leaders, religious leaders, spiritual leaders, but no proper leadership. All that they do is to become bigger and bigger leaders — eating off the masses, feeding off the masses, making empty promises. And therefore, in this country we have this peculiar feature that the hiatus between the educated and the uneducated, between the rich and the poor, between the holy and the unholy, it is always growing.

Yesterday I was talking to brother Rene Tosti about salaries in Switzerland, and I was amazed to see that the lowest salary and the highest salary, they are differing by hardly a factor of four. Whereas in France, a neighbouring country, it could be forty, perhaps. In India, it could be four thousand. So it is not that the prosperous must come down, but that they should raise those who are not so prosperous. It is the function of education. The educated must make the other people educated. Nobody wants an educated man to become uneducated — which is not possible. And what would be the use? That is not the idea of democratic functioning; but they should spread education while remaining themselves educated, while remaining and behaving like gentlemen.

The rich should make other people rich. Nobody implies that a rich man must become poor so that his wealth can be distributed — that would be stupid. If all the wealth of India was distributed equally today, every head of population may get ten rupees, and that is not going to serve any purpose. Similarly, water flowing from above to below must generate power.

So you see, the function of the high is to bring up the low. I mean, that's what you do when you raise, and when you pull something from below, like this, using your hands. And in this,

our country has been, I should say, very sadly lacking, despicably lacking, especially in our spheres — spirituality, religion. You see all these *mathaadhipatis* [pontiffs of monasteries] becoming richer and richer; *mathas* [monasteries] becoming richer and richer, but the people who go to pray remain as they are — ignorant, foolish, sinful — and no leader says, "You are remaining like this! What is wrong with you?" "No, no, you come, take *prasad*, I will pray for you." Our people should tell them, "You pray for yourself! As you are, are you going anywhere except down? You are cheating the public. You are beguiling the public with false promises, false ways of worship, glittering ways of worship, fireworks, diamonds over deities." The deity may be rich, but what about you?

So you see, we have to train the leadership in leadership. It's not enough to have leaders. A wrong leader and the whole thing can go wrong. You have seen sometimes in the military that the leader of a company or a platoon doesn't know where he is going; he has not trained himself properly. He doesn't know woodcraft; he does not know how to read the stars; he is lost in the jungle. We have read of, in the Second World War, some troops of the Japanese Army lost in the jungles of Burma, coming out after twenty years still thinking that the war is on. They have been lost all this time; they did not know the direction, they could not read the signs, they had no orders, they did not know what to do. So you see, leadership is like the locomotive of a train. If the train is to move, the locomotive has to move. After all, it's the engine which pulls the whole train.

So, in our Mission, too, we must make sure that the leadership is adequate at the centre, at the centres, at the smaller centres, sub-centres, everywhere. We are going on making preceptors, but if they are not going to give correct guidance, the abhyasis will remain as they are. Therefore, we don't want to grow in numbers without growth in quality. Now some people say, "Babuji Maharaj did not want numbers, only quality," which is a wrong statement. He did not want *only* numbers. He wanted numbers coupled with quality. That's like cattle, you know. I don't want only to buy one thousand rotten cows which will not give milk. I would rather have

one cow which gives milk; then I would have two cows which would give milk, then three.

So you see, we should not misquote the Masters. There are occasions when I have been present, and I have been misquoted myself. Which is rather tragic, because it only shows people are not listening to what I am saying, not reading their things properly. So the first value, first item of leadership, is that the leader must equip himself so thoroughly that he cannot only lead his flock, but train leaders again. It's like teachers training college. A teacher must train other people to become teachers, so that they can go out and teach. It is like a machine tool factory where not products are made, but machines are made which can make other machines. So unless these requirements of leadership are fulfilled, we will just remain, you see, as we are. And we must look to other centres which are growing very magnificently and see why they are growing.

You see, many centres have been languishing like this. Bombay used to be like this, it is growing now. I mean, I don't like to name names, but still, you know, for comparison, for you all to study — what is it that is going on. Everybody knows and talks about Ahmedabad centre. Why? People are jealous. Not only talking of Ahmedabad, but the whole of Gujarat now. You go to Ahmedabad, you go to Jamnagar, you go to Bhavnagar, you go to Navsari, Vadodara, everywhere there is growth. Why is Gujarat growing and not Tamilnadu? I mean they are also people there, and we are also human beings here. There is nothing special about a Gujarati. On the contrary, many of them are dirty fellows just interested in money. But yet the Mission is growing there, all over Gujarat.

So it means that it's not just enough to work, but the work must be done in the right way, you see. Like food is not enough; it must be chewed and digested properly before it will conduce to our growth and our health. Work done just haphazardly and in a routine way, is not going to take us anywhere. Work must be thought out. Work must be directed; work must be purposeful; and the man who works must put his will behind the whole thing.

This idea of preceptors giving sittings should not become just a routine exercise, as, "Sit before me. Babuji is doing the work." There must be your will behind it. Abhyasis must be told, "Don't just close your eyes and pretend to meditate. If you are going to do only that, you are not going to grow." And sometimes I think we have come now to a stage where we should probably start weeding out; because, you know, in a good field of corn or rice, if there are too many weeds, it will stifle the good crop. That's why you employ labour, to go and pull out the weeds.

So you see, this problem of the growth of the Mission — for service of humanity, please remember that. We are not trying to increase numbers because we want numbers here. Yesterday somebody was talking about the elections in Tiruppur, and I said, "Yes. They are running all over the country looking for votes. They are campaigning for votes." So an abhyasi laughed and said, "Sir, you are also running around the country, but campaigning for hearts instead of votes." I said, "Yes. But here we campaign for hearts for *your* good. They campaign for votes for their own good." This much difference is there, and it is an enormous difference.

Now, this hall the Mission has made available, it is for whose purpose? So that you all may sit, meditate in peace, have a place where you can gather, even every day if you like. You must make use of it. Otherwise, a nice hall, locked up all the time, opened only on Sundays — it will be a waste of money, you see. So I would suggest that you should have satsangh here, at least twice: Wednesday evening, Sunday morning; make it a whole day affair on Sundays. See, people must get together, speak together, live together some time, and see what this thing is all about. It is not something like going to the toilet that I am there for half an hour, I finish my job and come out, and I don't think of it till tomorrow morning again. People have to be told that meditation is a twenty-four hour process, all the time, every time.

The process of meditation, actually sitting down, closing your eyes, is only to initiate the process for the rest of the day, so that that meditative attitude continues. And togetherness.

brotherhood, can grow only by spending half a day — one day. Ask everybody to bring his *tiffin* packet here. You don't have to pay for it. Everybody can bring his two *idlis* and a *vadai* and all of you sit here and eat at one o'clock, sleep an hour, have another meditation at four o'clock. You know the enormous benefit we are finding in Madras, for instance, after we had this place of meditation; where now I go on Saturday mornings and I stay till Sunday evening, two days. There are at least a hundred people continuously staying there now. And also it has become a centre of attraction. People from neighbouring centres come from Chittur, from Nellore, all these places.

So you see, we have to provide a nucleus. A meditation hall is essentially a nucleus. So far we have been conducting it at Ramakrishnan's house. We are grateful to their family. They have provided a place. But I have found that there's always a reservation in going to somebody's home for meditation; whoever's home, even in my house there were people who did not like to come, even to my house. They said, "What is this, Sir, if I come, I have do this, I cannot go there, I cannot do that." Of course, we have restrictions in homes; it cannot be, you know, that it's like a hotel — they are natural restrictions. Therefore, we graduate out of that and build a meditation place. Even here, you must be able to feel that this is your home. Everybody should be able to feel this is my home. But you can feel it as your home only if you come here and use this place.

You should also encourage people from other centres to come and have satsangh here, once in a way. For instance, we have this enormous ashram in Augerans in France. We have now, practically, weekend seminars; the place has to be kept maintained. Now, anything which is disused goes into disrepair. Things have to be used to be maintained properly. Otherwise, fittings will rust, electricity wires will go rotten, and you put on the switch and nothing will happen. So to keep it used, in Augerans we have this system that sometimes the Belgian abhyasis come and use it, sometimes the Dutch abhyasis come and use it, sometimes the southern French abhyasis come and use it — weekend seminars, hundred people, eighty people, two hundred people.

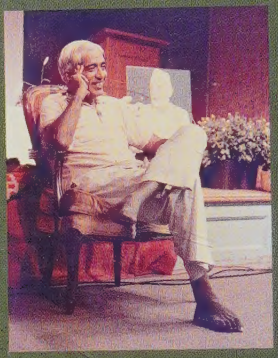
So to promote that sort of use, there must be some interest in the place, some interest in meditation, and the ability to come here, use this place all the time. It must be a haven, a retreat — not 'heaven', but a haven.

So I hope that those of you who are in the position of guiding others here, form within yourself a small committee. How to maintain this place? What funds are necessary? Make a budget — annual budget. Promote this idea of brotherhood, make people come, make people stay here overnight, if necessary. At least Sundays, full day you must be here, all of you. It will also keep you away from a lot of mischief in which you will otherwise be involved, because Sunday is a free day. Yes, I know many people who used to play cards and all that in Ahmedabad, now don't go to play cards. They come and sit, when we are there. I know most people who come to Madras for the two days of the weekend, who used to watch pictures on the TV, or go to the cinemas; now there is a centre of attraction, they are here. And the secret is, this place must become such an attraction that even if you tell them to go somewhere, they will not be willing to go. This you have to create. It's no use saying, "Sir, they don't come. What can I do? They come here till three o'clock and at three thirty they go for the evening show." Which only means you are not providing here something which would overcome the pull of that cinema or drama.

It is for us to provide. And that you have to provide, by creating the right atmosphere, right atmosphere spiritually, right atmosphere in human terms, in social terms, so that people will be pulled here against their wishes, if necessary. So all these things are in your hands. It is a joint effort. Don't blame only the preceptors. It is something in which every abhyasi should take interest for his or her own welfare, and the welfare of the community that we represent. So I hope all of you will work towards this purpose. And not just have a bit of property but have a real meditation hall where we can all grow.

Thank you.

The Principles of Sahaj Marg Volume XIV



"Sahaj Marg, above all, teaches us this very essential truth that: I am what I am, because of what I did and thought in the past — samskaras. I shall be in the future whatever I wish to be, if I do and think in the right way now, in the present. So the onus for spiritual development is totally in the abhyasi, on the abhyasi. What does the Master do? He helps. How good can be his help? It can be total, if your dependence on him is total"

Shri P. Rajagopalachari

The author, Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, (born in India in 1927), is the spiritual head and president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission. He was raised in the rich cultural heritage of the East and educated extensively in the Western tradition. He emphasises that regulation of the mind is essential for the discovery of the true nature of one's inner self.

The Principles of Sahaj Marg Volume XIV is the collection of the talks given by the author during his travel across India between the period January to May 1991.

Sahaj Marg (the Natural Path) is a Raja Yoga system of spiritual training based on heart-centred meditation, simplified for modern life. The practice is founded on the principle that God is all-pervasive, and therefore pervades the heart of each and every person. The goal of the practice is explicitly spiritual: attaining the ultimate goal of human existence, which is oneness with God, or Self.

Training in Sahaj Marg is free of charge and is open to all over eighteen years of age. The only qualification is a genuine and abiding interest in spiritual growth and the willingness to participate.

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